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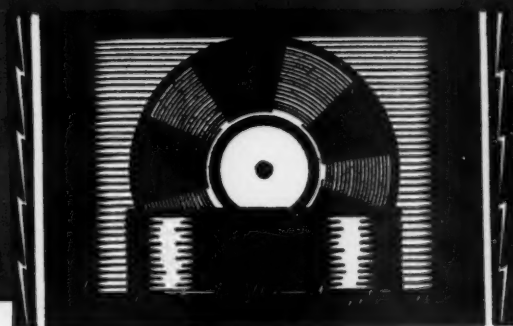
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# The AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



RECORDS

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EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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# The American Music Lover

A MUSICAL CONNOISSEUR'S MAGAZINE

## DECEMBER

Volume III, No. 8

## 1937

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To All Readers and Friends  
We Extend  
Greetings for the Holiday Season

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### EDITORIAL

**C**RITICISM being one of our principal functions, it behooves us at this time of the year to speak upon this subject, for the good will of all is involved in its pursuit. By criticism we mean assessing the value of a thing. Many music lovers tell us that they would like to become, when listening to music, better critics. Learning to criticize is not, however, the first step in the true enjoyment of music; what is more important is learning to understand, for without understanding no criticism will assist one in eventual appreciation.

A great weakness in all human nature is a propensity to criticize others rather than ourselves. There are few of us who are not guilty of this habit, and although we condemn it in the other fellow we do nothing about remedying it in ourselves. Criticism, in order to be constructive, must function reciprocally. To see ourselves as others see us helps us to see the other fellow in a better light, and it frequently makes us appreciate points in his character that we would not appreciate in any other manner. This principle leads to tolerance and tolerance should be applied to our attitude towards music, and if it is applied it will make us receptive to a greater variety of music than if we approach it with only a critical attitude. All composers, in the creation of a composition, believe that they have something to say; this has nothing to do with the fact of whether they say it badly or well. If we are interested in music, we should surely approach new music, or music never before heard, with an open mind and the desire to understand it before we criticize it. If we approach it entirely from a critical standpoint, we are very apt to miss many of its true values. And no amount of

(Kindly turn to Page 324)

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BORI AS MIMI



Bori as  
Manon



## LUCREZIA BORI RECORDS

By PETER HUGH REED

**M**USIC lovers will no doubt be gratified to know that Lucrezia Bori has made a special series of operatic arias for her many admirers, which RCA-Victor will issue in an album set. Bori — “the first lady of the opera house,” as she has been called, is truly a great artist — who was, as one critic has stated, “destined from birth to be a celebrity,” although officially retired from the opera-world she is nevertheless still active in the world of music. It is indeed welcome news to know that this admirable soprano has seen fit to record for posterity a group of arias selected from the roles of her creations on the operatic stage.

Miss Bori's program for her new record album is well contrasted. She has chosen from her wide repertoire several arias never before recorded, in addition to some closely associated with her operatic career. At our suggestion, she recorded three Mozart arias and one from Wolf-Ferrari's *Secret of Suzanne*. In her singing of the Mozart selections, more especially *Deh vieni non tardar* from *Nozze di Figaro*, Miss Bori tells us she fol-

lows the tradition instigated by Adelina Patti in her rendition of the airs. Like many modern singers, Miss Bori omits the appoggiaturas in these arias. Her recorded program contains the following eight selections:

MOZART: *Nozze di Figaro* - *Deh vieni non tardar*; *Don Giovanni* - *Batti, batti bel Masetto*; *Don Giovanni* - *Vedrai, carino*; PUCCINI: *La Rondine* - *Ore dolce e divine*; WOLF-FERRARI: *Secret of Susanna* — *O gioia*; DE FALLA: *La Vida Breve* - *Aria de Salud*; MASANET: *Manon* - *Adieu notre petite table*, and *Gavotte*.

A recital by Lucrezia Bori has been aptly described as “a rare experience”. On the concert platform, as well as on the operatic stage, she casts her spell. And this holds good also in her radio broadcasts and in her recordings. For she always sings her programs in her own inimitable manner; each song, each aria is molded by her lovely voice and her rare musical sensitivity into a rare achievement. It has been well said: “she leaves her audience captivated; haunted by

the memory of a charm as vivid as her singing."

It was the late H. T. Parker, dean of New England music critics, who wrote in *The Boston Evening Transcript*: "Bori is the sensitive musician, the adept singer, whatever the piece or the environment." This has always been the keynote of her enviable artistry — the real reason for her great success.

"Music is not 'just notes' to me," she says, "each song, each aria requires its own individual treatment. Each phrase, each stanza has a definite meaning which is to be interpreted. Merely to sing the notes is not enough, one must feel and convey the rhythmic impulse, the nuance of each line, the poet's meaning as well as the composer's notations."

"Bori is a fastidious perfectionist," another critic writes. "hers is an economy of means with an opulence of meaningfulness."

This was borne out in her recent recording session. After each aria was sung, she listened to it and carefully noted any points with which she was dissatisfied, and in a subsequent recording session, she immediately made the improvements she thought necessary.

"Recording today," she said, "is so much more satisfactory than it was when I first made records. One hears vocal nuances that one never heard before. The microphone is so sensitive, it shows up mistakes as well as

artistic effects, therefore one should listen very carefully to the initial recording so that the final one will be a thing of perfect fidelity."

In the studio Miss Bori was a gracious personality, solicitous of everyone's welfare. When it was necessary for certain musicians to be resealed, in order to perfect the instrumental balance, she stood aside taking as much interest in the proceedings as though she were one of them rather than the star of the occasion. For several hours she worked to perfect her records, with never a complaint at the length of time taken or the re-recordings that were necessary because of flaws in the wax or blemishes in the orchestral background occasioned by a broken string or an extraneous sound of a bow striking the instrument. Dr. Frank Black, the conductor, and the men were equally thrilled with her charm, her perseverance and her infinite patience, all too rare in prima donnas. But Bori had just cause to be pleased herself, for as she later said: "Rarely have I had such buoyant, singing accompaniments as Dr. Black has given me."

Lucrezia Bori was a Christmas gift to her fond parents in the Spanish city of Valencia. She stems from a long line of illustrious ancestors, statesmen, monseigneurs, military heroes, and men and women eminent in literature. Her aristocratic style in song is therefore congenital. Her father was an artillery colonel; her mother a woman of both literary and musical attainments; her paternal uncle the Monseigneur of the Valencia Cathedral, and the possessor of a superb bass voice.

Bori made her debut as a singer at the tender age of six at the University School in Valencia, singing Arditi's *Il Bacio* at a charity concert for the benefit of the soldiers' orphans. Had the movies been in existence then, she would undoubtedly have been exploited as a child prodigy, which exploitation might well have altered her eventual destiny. It is said that the Borja family (that is the original spelling of her name, which she later Italianized for her stage career) recognized the fact that she was born to sing, for as a little girl she sang as naturally as a bird. When she was four, she would creep from her bed, after the family went below stairs, onto a balcony outside her window and press her small form against the balustrade to listen to the music issuing from the Teatro Pizarro across the street. At first her singing of snatches of the arias she overheard did not raise the family's suspicions, for they



A recent portrait  
of Miss Bori

innocently credited all this to a talent they thought probably inherited from her great uncle, the Monseigneur at the Cathedral; but later, as her singing of the arias became more comprehensive, her family learned the truth.

Aristocratic prejudices against the stage were overcome early in the Borja family; there was no question that little Lucrezia was destined to be a great singer, if properly guided. Her first instruction was obtained under Farvaro in Valencia. Afterwards she went to Milan and completed her studies under Vidal, the famous Spanish teacher. She was just seventeen when her father gave up his military office to chaperon his daughter while she pursued her studies in Italy. Her father remained with her until his death. "My first and my unforgettable sorrow," she says.

Bori made her operatic debut six months after she came to Milan as Micaela in *Carmen*. This was at the Adriano. The great acclaim accorded her here resulted in her engagement for the famous La Scala. Here she sang for two years; then followed an engagement at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, where she achieved one of her greatest triumphs. After this came the Metropolitan in New York. She made her debut here in November, 1912 as Manon Lescaut (in Puccini's opera) with Caruso and Scotti singing opposite her. Critics and public alike acclaimed her. That night remains a memorable one to those of us who heard her. For youth is inevitably thrilled by youth, and the enchanting charm of Bori's radiant adolescence, the sensitive vibrancy of her fresh, young voice, made her presentation of Manon Lescaut an outstanding one, never equalled before or since at the Metropolitan. It was as Fiora in *The Love of Three Kings* that Bori attained the pinnacle of her success in her first association with the Metropolitan. The present writer vividly recalls her first performance in the exacting role, with Ferrari-Fontana as Avito, Pasquale Amato as Manfredo, and Adamo Didur as Archibaldo. She was young, alert, intensely alive, and her beauty of person was as compelling as her fine singing and her incomparable acting.

Henry T. Finck, one the foremost critics of his time, said of her Fiora: "To see her fascinating poses and graceful gestures in the role that made her famous, Fiora in *The Love of Three Kings*, was to witness an epitome of all the most alluring attributes of Spanish womanhood."

Bori's successful career at the Metropolitan was unfortunately interrupted in 1915, by the results of a throat operation performed



that summer in Italy. It was five years before the singer returned to America. Her reappearance, on January 28, 1921, as Mimi in *La Bohème* was the occasion for great rejoicing among opera fans. Well do we remember that night. Gigli sang opposite her, and all of us present remarked that he never sang better; it was as if he was inspired by the exquisite artistry of his fellow singer. After this Miss Bori sang with the Metropolitan company continuously until the Spring of 1936, when she retired from the operatic world to devote herself to concertizing.

Miss Bori's services with the Metropolitan Opera House were not confined to her artistic achievements, for, to her belongs much of the credit for the maintenance of the opera company during the trying years of 1933 and 1934. As chairman of the campaigns for maintaining opera at the famous Broadway citadel in New York, she worked earnestly and indefatigably. In the Spring of 1935, in honor of her outstanding work, Miss Bori was elected to membership in the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association.

The story of Bori does not end here — there is more to tell, although space will not permit us to do more than merely indicate it. She has been termed "the best dressed artiste on the stage." But whether on the operatic

stage, the concert stage, in the home, or on the street, Miss Bori is inevitably *très chic*.

In private life Miss Bori likes to boast of her golf game, which is understandable, for she is an expert golfer. A true lover of sports, she plays an excellent tennis game, is a good swimmer, and even drives her own car. And when we tell you that she is a charming and gracious hostess, we have introduced you to a celebrity who is decidedly worth knowing both as an artist and as a woman.

Let us hope Miss Bori's career will extend for many years to come.

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### A NOTE FROM LONDON

Our roving correspondent, Mr. Eugene Weintraub, writes from London as follows:

"Recently the BBC completed the forty-third Prom season. Although most of us Americans have read about these concerts, few have a clear picture as to how they are conducted. I have heard about the Proms for many years, but I was totally unprepared for what I saw.

"Imagine our Carnegie Hall with two balconies and with a parquet bereft of seats (except for a few placed near the walls). Your English music lover finds a place to stand and stand he does for some three hours. For this privilege he pays two shillings — fifty cents. Prices for seats in the two balconies range from three to seven shillings.

"There have been times when I have heard complaints from New Yorkers about the hardness of our Stadium seats. These grumblers should stand around Queens Hall sometime to learn what discomfort means. To add to this discomfort, everyone is allowed to smoke (it is surprising how lenient the English laws are in this respect — there are smokers in theatres, cinemas, and even in the subways); pipes, cigars and cigarettes come out and soon the hall is suffused with smoke. And so it happened that in this refreshing atmosphere, while Miss Hess was cadenzating a Beethoven Concerto, a man did a cadenza all his own by fainting and he was cadenza-ed out of the hall by two bystanders.

"The BBC orchestra is a competent ensemble, especially the string section. (In passing, I might add that there are many women in this orchestra, and that the string players place their mutes on top of their ears when playing *senza sordino*). The woodwinds are weak, especially with regard to intonation. Also, in this section one misses the ideal tonal blend of the different instruments and they fail to 'sing' as we in America are accustomed to hear first desk men sing.

"Londoners have been enjoying the Proms for 43 years; that should be a sufficient answer to any criticism. But as I looked around me, observing the tired people (remember that this was after office work) squirming, shifting from one foot to the other, sitting down and getting up again, the thought kept running through my mind, 'Why not put the seats back?' The thought is so naive that I was afraid to utter it (BBC officials assure me that there would be a revolution if any aspect of these concerts were changed). The original idea was that people should promenade while they listened to the music. But now so many people are crowded into the hall that it is impossible to promenade. The reason for making hundreds of tired people stand around for hours is not a financial one: at present, from 1,200 to 1,500 fill the hall each night, at two shillings each. Put the 965 seats back in the hall; charge, not two shillings, but three or four (which is still reasonable for an orchestra seat) and the difference, financially, need not be considered. It is true, of course, that if such a change were made, fewer people would be accommodated, but they would be comfortable, at any rate.

"The BBC announces for the coming fall and winter season two series of concerts. Soloists include Jelly D'Aranyi, Casals, Myra Hess, Backhaus, Milstein and Petri. Conductors officiating are Boult, Mengelberg, Harty, Wood, Sargent and Prokofieff. Toscanini will conduct the Beethoven *Ninth* and the Brahms *Requiem*.

"The BBC television department will broadcast Ravel's *Bolero*. The first desk men will then become (as our own musicians are fast becoming) actors for a time."



# The Position of Tschaikowsky

By JOHN MELVILLE HOWARD

THERE comes a time when the listener with a library of phonograph records from which to select finds himself in a peculiarly exacting mood. He desires music of a certain sort, the immediate definition of which eludes him. Everything which he plays leaves the thirst unquenched. He finds no composer who seems to have the abandon, the exultance, the certain something his mood demands — no one, that is, until he turns to Tschaikowsky.

Is the craving then, unmusical, that of all great music makers on records only one can give it satisfaction? Frequently the listener has a *preference* for one or another composer, even a strong preference, but this is a different experience: the choice, however biased, is between almost equally tasty foods of the same type; the need Tschaikowsky fills is for a radical change of diet. And it is not likely the craving could be stayed by any art other than music; to all analysis the mood is remarkably musical.

Just what makes the appeal of Tschaikowsky's music so strong and unique? Probably it is his saying in the most fundamental and unashamed terms that which other composers cannot feel or, feeling, sublimate in many beautiful ways to make something magnificent perhaps but — different.

It is a mistake to attach concrete sentiments to a wordless art unless the composer himself takes that liberty — and even then there is a large faction in the audience who will disapprove — but Tschaikowsky's music suggests such notions more irresistably than that of any other first-rate composer save possibly Schumann's.

In a letter to Nadeshda Von Meck dated March 1, 1878, Tschaikowsky makes the following interesting comments on this point: "You ask if in composing this symphony (the *Fourth*) I had a special program in view. To such questions regarding my symphonic works I usually answer: 'Nothing of the kind.' In reality it is very difficult to

answer this question. How interpret those vague feelings which pass through one during the composition of an instrumental work, without reference to any definite subject? It is a purely lyrical process, a kind of musical shriving of the soul, in which there is an incrustation of material which flows forth again in notes, just as the lyrical poet pours himself out in verse. The difference consists in the fact that music possesses far richer means of expression, and is a more subtle medium in which to translate the thousand shifting moments in the mood of a soul."

Such terrific emotional intensity must have a single focus, some burning cause which the music seems struggling to tell. Sometimes it seems very close to words, close and yet beyond, in a kind of emotional nakedness, poignant and ultimately expressive as a scream, a groan, a sigh.

Further in the letter just quoted Tschaikowsky says: "It would be vain to try to put into words that immeasurable sense of bliss which comes over me directly a new idea awakens in me and begins to assume a definite form. I forget everything and behave like a madman. Everything within me starts pulsing and quivering; hardly have I begun to sketch ere one thought follows another."

No abstraction, no generality ever caused pain and exultance and love like this. Here is no strong faith in the largeness of the universe such as Beethoven urges, nor in the peace of God which Bach and Franck descant. There is nothing here of Brahms' great philosophical grasp, or of Mozart's objectivity, or of Wagner's heroic majesty. In short, Tschaikowsky seems to lack the qualities which have conferred immortality upon his peers; or, to state it otherwise, Tschaikowsky contributes to music something for which there is no substitute elsewhere.

Mr. Reed happily has dubbed him "Everyman's Musician." For years now only one other composer has matched him in popularity with concert-goers — Beethoven him-



self. Nonetheless, were the unsophisticated critically alone in their liking for his music we might question their taste, but likely it is shared by more critics than are ready to display it.

Since the day when his music was known as modern there has been an unbroken line of Those Who Disapprove of Tchaikowsky, who believe it their solemn duty to disparage his work, and who would consider open praise of him proof of cultural immaturity. In print these gentlemen, reluctantly forced to give him mention, adopt a curiously ambiguous attitude. He has many admirable aspects, they acknowledge: no one has been able to construct a more charming and perfect children's suite than the *Nutcracker*; there are few rivals of the *Romeo and Juliet Overture* in the realm of love music; no one ever sounded the depths of despair as fully as the composer of the *Pathétique*. These things are true and many more which these gentlemen at their candid best admit, yet not one of that numerous brotherhood is so tasteless as to call Tchaikowsky great. What is greatness? If any part of its definition does not fit Tchaikowsky then it needs revision.

A very few years ago the learned were declaring with Mr. Eduard Hanslick, the foremost critic of his day, that Tchaikowsky should confine his talents to fields other than music. "The violin concerto," says Hanslick, "brings us for the first time to the horrid idea that there may be music that stinks in the ear."

Tchaikowsky lacks stamina, the discriminating intoned, he lacks backbone, and he drips with sentimentality. Such undraped exhibitionism has no place in the concert hall — why, it is almost indecent!

The answer is that some critics are still saying it today, and after this considerable interval of unavailing propaganda we must conclude that the critics are the victims of a strange occupational failing known as auditory blind spots, and ought before taking up the pen against Tchaikowsky to consult the uncorrupted ears of their non-literary neighbors.

Not that Tchaikowsky is without his limitations — they are perceptible to listeners less erudite than Mr. Hanslick (who, incidentally, also hated Wagner) — but he is great perhaps because and not in spite of them. For one thing, we cannot bear many closely successive repetitions of any one of his compositions without experiencing a

cloying sense of satiety. The once resplendent themes have begun to wear thin and seem a little banal and more than a little overwrought. But then — we do not sit down to re-read a novel of Dostoevsky or D. H. Lawrence immediately upon finishing it. Some of the finest pages of the great Russian writer, when examined in cold blood, read like gross parodies.

Again, Tchaikowsky wrote much that was merely sensational. Well — Beethoven was not above perpetrating the *Battle Symphony*. Tchaikowsky had developed a full-bodied, somewhat florid style which, when used in discussing impersonal things, such as the 1812 affair, was woefully out of proportion, pompous and meretricious. But when used in speaking of those concerns which filled his spirit to overflowing all its pretensions were justified, all the redundancies consumed in the blaze.

Very few great artists have been so taken to people's hearts as Tchaikowsky. Mr. Reed has observed that in Tchaikowsky's deeper anguish the heartache of the listener finds its sympathy and appeasement; in his sweet burden of loveliness made articulate the listener's stifled dreaming finds its freedom. This is Aristotle's *Katharsis*. It is foolish, if we are melancholy, to dose ourselves with some gay medicine — only by yielding to the fullest expression of the emotion can we be rid of it.

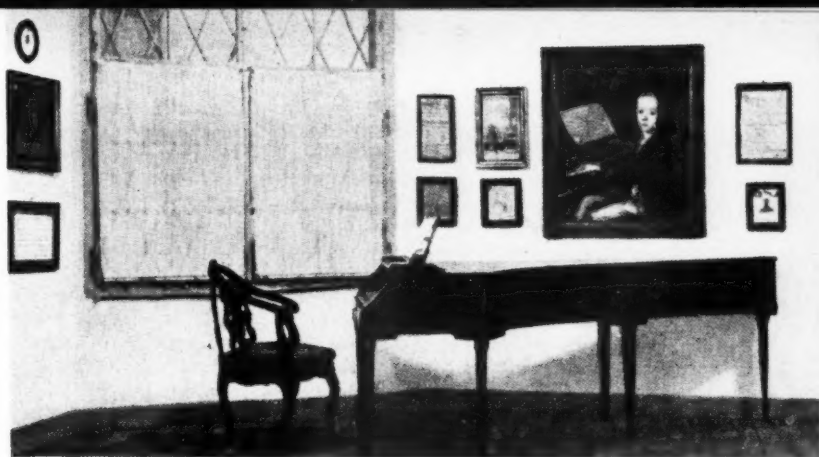
Perhaps those humors which find their solvent in Tchaikowsky are slow of accumulation and but seldom insistent, and perhaps the antidotes provided by others are more necessary to a good life, yet Tchaikowsky's tonic in its time is without substitute and beyond price.

Already there is noticeable a change of attitude regarding him. When anyone as mighty as Stravinsky takes up the battle on the side of his (how different!) countryman, and record companies keep his work in circulation with up-to-date recordings, we may even expect to see a change in the prevailing critical coldness. Soon it may be the part of sophistication to praise him. He may become the fashion!

Well, he will weather the fashion, as has each of the other great composers in his turn. And however tired of his familiar melodies we may grow, however eagerly refresh ourselves with the solid austerities of Bach, let us not disown him who once stood us in good stead: for likely it will happen that we thirst again.



Mozart's birthplace:  
interior



## Seven Works by Mozart

Reviewed by PETER HUGH REED

MOZART: *Flute Quartet in D major*, K-285. *Flute Quartet in A major*, K-298; played by the Oxford Ensemble (Wittgenstein, flute; Neidell, violin; Witz, viola; Bilstin, cello). Musicraft set No. 7, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.50.

MOZART: *Flute Concerto in G major*, K-313; played by M. Moyse, with orchestra conducted by Eugene Bigot. Victor set M-396, three discs, price \$5.00.

MOZART: *Piano Concerto in B flat major*, K-450; played by Elly Ney with Chamber Orchestra conducted by Willem Von Hoogstraten. Victor set M-365, three discs, price \$5.00.

MOZART: *Piano Concerto in F major*, K-459; played by Arthur Schnabel and London Symphony Orchestra, direction Malcolm Sargent. Victor set M-389, three and one-half discs, price \$7.00.

MOZART: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K-525; played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Bruno Walter. Victor set M-364, two discs, price \$3.50.

MOZART: *Quartet in E flat major*, K-428; played by the Pro Arte Quartet. Victor set M-375, three discs, price \$6.50.

THE popularity of Mozart may be traced to the truly limitless variety of his music, its wholeheartedness, its simplicity, and its songfulness. Eric Blom, in his excellent book of Mozart, says that he "understood life from top to bottom as a human being. He could not specialize in any

one emotion. His artistic intuition had taught him too much about life as a whole, and it was his mission to pour his knowledge into his work, to be the possession neither of ascetics nor of rakes, but of those in whom the multiform phases of existence had found some sort of balance".

"This," Blom contends, "is his title to lasting glory. It was his tragedy too, no doubt, while he lived, for the conviction grows as one studies him that, occupied as he was with all human experience, he was incapable of devoting himself particularly to one. The happiness that passes all understanding did not come anywhere into his short life, so that it is perhaps a consolation to know how short that life was." Yet, one has the feeling that had he lived longer he would have gone farther and realized infinite variety in his music. Had he lived longer, Beethoven's place in history might have been assessed differently.

Mozart wrote his two flute quartets and his two flute concertos in Mannheim and in Paris during the six months prior to the tragic death of his mother, which occurred in July, 1778. They give us "a wonderful picture of his soul" at this time, as Ghéon says; the music is full of lightness and gaiety, an unfettered spirit and a youthful elation. There is contemplation too, a contemplation at once resigned and elevated, to be found in the lovely *adagio* of the *D major Quartet*.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *A major Quartet* is a first recording, but not so the *D major*. The latter has been

available for some time in a rare performance by René Le Roy and three members of the International String Quartet on two discs issued by The National Gramophonic Society. Milton Wittgenstein, the flutist in the Oxford Ensemble, plays this music, as do his associates, with ease and fluency, yet not in a manner to make us forget completely the performance of Le Roy, in whose playing, as one writer has said, "effort is lost in effect." The Oxford Ensemble, however, have done justice to the music of both works, and Musicraft has given us excellently balanced recordings. Each quartet takes two ten-inch discs in the recording, the *D major* being on records Nos. 201 and 202, and the *A major* on records Nos. 203 and 204.

Some years ago, Marcel Moyse recorded for French HMV Mozart's *Flute Concerto in D major*, K-314, but unfortunately in an excised version — the lovely *andante* was cut and the final *allegro* badly mutilated. Despite this fact, these records were acclaimed and many music lovers imported them to this country. Moyse has contributed a great deal of flute music to recorded literature, but perhaps none that will give more lasting enjoyment than his latest offering, an uncut performance of Mozart's *G major Concerto*, which although of lesser import than the composer's piano concertos listed above nevertheless has its attractions. The work is splendidly recorded with a good balance between the soloist and the orchestra.

The two piano concertos, which Victor brings to us in their current special European list, are among his most attractive works in this form. They date from 1784, a year in which he wrote no less than six piano concertos. The recording of the *B flat Concerto* has been almost ideally accomplished: it is played by a chamber orchestra of fitting size and the piano tone blends well with the accompaniment. Elly Ney plays the brilliant and difficult first movement with assurance and appropriate feeling (her phrasing here is particularly commendable); and in the embroidered *andante* she wisely avoids sentimental exaggeration. A little heavy handed in the opening of the shallow finale, she regains her stride midway in the recording. In the finale, Miss Ney cuts the cadenzas, to the advantage of the music. Van Hoogstraten gives an admirable orchestral background to the pianist, and the recording is completely satisfactory.

Schnabel plays Mozart, except in the slow movements, more from the head than from the heart — a grave mistake, for Mozart even in his quicker movements owns emotional

qualities which should not be ignored. The *F major Concerto* has been called a bucolic work, perhaps because of the sprightliness of its outer movements. Its first movement has been termed "one of the most subtly designed." Schnabel, curiously, realizes neither its subtlety nor its delicacy. He plays brilliantly with a crisp, almost metallic touch; his musicianship that is admirable, but hardly wholly satisfying. And yet his performance is infinitely more desirable than that of George Boskoff,\* who attacked the music in a far too heavy-handed manner. The poetic *allegretto*, in which Mozart anticipates Susanna's last act aria in the *Marriage of Figaro*, finds Schnabel more in sympathy with the music. The dance-like finale, intriguingly broken up with fugato passages, is impeccably set forth by the pianist but scarcely with appreciation of its playful buoyancy. Sargent at the helm of the London Symphony provides the pianist with a well-rounded background, tempered however to the soloist's conception of the music. The recording here is brilliant and lifelike. This performance contrasts greatly with the one above, since it is more in the modern concert hall spirit, a larger orchestra being employed.

Mozart's little serenade, which he modestly called *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* needs no introduction to our readers. It is one of the most familiar and widely loved works of the composer. It was written in Vienna in 1787, four years before Mozart's untimely death, shortly after the magnificent string quintets in *C major* and *G minor* (K-515 and 516). It has been recorded at least ten times, but no one who has played it has given a more satisfactory reading than Bruno Walter. It is good to have this re-recording of his performance, so much richer and fuller than his previous one and more revealing of his many subtleties and nuances.

The Pro Arte Quartet play Mozart too much in the manner of Haydn. Yet their fine musicianship and splendid tonal polish, and the perfect blend of their instruments, are commendable qualities; and, although one may feel there is more to be obtained from this music, it would be foolish to deny the sterling qualities of this performance. That Mozart deserves more delicacy and less forthrightness, those who are attuned to his music will agree. The *E flat Quartet*, "rich in the possession of many varied beauties," as Dunhill says, presents a task for any quartet. Mozart touches a romantic mood in the opening movement; the famous *andante* with its

\*Columbia Masterwork Set No. 170 — withdrawn.

Tristan-like chromaticism, gives way to a rustic mood in the forceful Minuet, and in his finale there is more than a suggestion of "wood-nymphs dancing."

This is the third of the six quartets that Mozart dedicated to Haydn. It was written in Vienna in the early summer of 1783. The composer was also at work on his great *Mass in C minor*, K-427, at this time, a work "which he vowed to write during an illness of Constanze's before his marriage, if she should recover and become his wife." The contemplative note, undoubtedly sought in the writing

of the Mass, is evidenced in this music, which for two movements at least, "touches an unaccustomed note of quiet sadness and almost ethereal tranquility."

This is the second recording of the *E flat Quartet* to be made. Several years ago, the Prisca Quartet played it for Polydor. Of the two performances, this of the Pro Arte's is more satisfying, more richly rewarding, and more splendidly recorded. The division of the movements here is: first movement, two sides; second movement, two sides; minuet and finale, one side each.

## The New Bach Organ Recordings

Performed by ALBERT SCHWEITZER and CARL WEINRICH

Reviewed by PHILIP MILLER

BACH: *Organ music, Volume 2 (Chorale Preludes)*; played by Albert Schweitzer on the organ of Ste. Aurélie, Strasbourg. Columbia set 310, price \$14.00.

BACH: *Trio Sonatas, Nos. 5 and 6*; played by Carl Weinrich, on the organ of the Westminster Choir School, Princeton, N. J. Musicraft set 6, price \$4.50.

AT last organ recording has come of age. At last the engineers have come to realize that the end to be attained is not volume or sheer tonal splendor, but clarity, balance and quality. Of course recording organists and the organs used in the past have had a great deal to do with this, for the number of artists has been comparatively small, and some of them have been variable quantities. It is said that Marcel Dupré used to play everything faster for American audiences than he was accustomed to do in Europe; and his work for the Anthologie Sonore was certainly on a different plane than his recordings for HMV and Victor.

The tide turned with the first volume of *Bach Organ Music* played by the great Dr. Schweitzer and recorded by Columbia a couple of years ago. French Pathé was next in the field with their historical set *Trois siècles de musique d'orgue* illustrating the rise of organ music up to the time of Bach, and presenting four distinguished organists André Marchal, Joseph Bonnet, Friedrich

Mihatsch and Charles Hens. Now this month sees the American release not only of the second volume of Dr. Schweitzer's Bach series, but the first important organ recordings to be made by American engineers, two of the Bach *Trio Sonatas*, played by Carl Weinrich for Musicraft on the Aeolian-Skinner organ at the Westminster Choir School in Princeton, N. J.

Weinrich himself has contributed an introduction to his recordings in the accompanying leaflet, and a paragraph or two should be quoted: "While there were various schools and types of organs, depending upon period and location, there were certain characteristics in which seventeenth century organs differed from those of today. Contrary to general belief, there was much interest in variety of tone color. In the modern organ the emphasis is often on variety of dynamics, development in organ-building having made possible a great deal of flexibility and shading within a given tone color. While old organs had a rather low wind pressure, modern actions make possible the development of very soft and very loud stops on high pressure. The effect of this on certain types of organ tone has not been satisfactory. The endeavor, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to imitate closely effects of the harmonium, as well as certain instruments and effects of the modern orchestra, led to a neglect of many tone colors which only now are being gradually revived.

"The old builders secured great variety through differences in pitch. On some manuals there was just one stop of unison pitch, each of the other stops speaking one of the harmonies of this fundamental. In the build-up to full organ, the addition of stops of higher pitch led to an ensemble which became brighter as it grew louder. The result was a brilliant tutti which had the transparency and clarity so well adapted to polyphonic music."

Dr. Schweitzer, it will be remembered, made a thorough search through London before he found an organ upon which he was satisfied to undertake the recording of his first volume. The result, as recording, was far superior to the organ reproductions which had preceded it, because the Doctor knows so well the value of clear lines in the playing of Bach, and because the engineers cooperated with him in his desire to make clarity the paramount feature of the discs. This year he has found an instrument even more to his liking, a Silbermann dating back to Bach's own time, in the Church of Ste. Aurélie in Strasbourg. While the first album emphasized the more spectacular side of Bach, the second is given over to a number of the *Chorale Preludes*, perhaps his greatest contribution to the literature. Schweitzer himself in his indispensable biography of the composer, and Alec Robinson in the booklet which accompanies this set, have dwelt upon the importance which Bach attached to the words of the original chorales which provided his melodies and inspiration. It was a happy thought, therefore, to provide with these records a translation of the chorale texts so that listeners unfamiliar with these grand hymns may appreciate more fully the subtleties of Bach's work. The titles in the album present a tempting array — the first real attempt to explore a particularly rich musical treasury: *Christum wir sollen loben schon; Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier; Mit Fried' und Freud' ich fahr' dahin; Christus, der unser selig macht; Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund; O Mensch beweine deine Sünde gross; O Lamm Gottes unschuldig; Sei gegrüßet, Jesu; An Wasserflüssen Babylon; Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele; Jesu Christus, unser Heiland; Christ lag in Todesbanden; Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag.*

Dr. Schweitzer is a great man—unquestionably one of the greatest of our time—and, as he is perhaps the world's first authority on Bach, his playing of the master's works, as well as anything he may write on the subject, is important. Technically, of course, he leaves much to be desired, though he does

know how these works should be played, and he is by nature a real musician. While I do not honestly feel that the Strasbourg organ is a very great advance over the London instrument, it has certainly a beautiful tone and well serves the organist's playing.

With the greatest respect and the sincerest admiration for Dr. Schweitzer, however, I must confess that turning to the Weinrich set is like letting in a burst of sunshine after sitting in a dimly lighted room. Here at last is an organist with a genuine and infectious sense of rhythm—an artist to whom it is impossible not to listen.

A favorite pupil of the late Lynwood Farnum (what a pity Farnum is not alive to record today!) Weinrich has his master's taste and devotion, and at the same time a youthful enthusiasm altogether his own. He plays for us here the Fifth and the Sixth *Trio Sonatas* of Bach. Because of their great technical difficulties, and also because of the general unpopularity of organ recitals, these works are not so well-known as they undoubtedly soon will be — for surely no one who hears the records will want to be without them. For a sample I recommend the opening *Allegro* from *Sonata No. 5*, or the *Lento* from *No. 6*, with its reminiscences of the great contralto solo from the *St. Matthew Passion*, *Erbarne dich, mein Gott*.

Musicaft's recording naturally invokes comparison with that of the Pathé set mentioned above, which has unfortunately not yet been given American release. There can be no question that these two albums rank easily as the best organ recordings to date. I do not hesitate to name Mr. Weinrich as the best organist in the lot, fine musicians as the four Pathé artists are. Weinrich's organ tone as recorded is more brilliant than that of the charmingly flutey instrument used in Pathé's set, and only a shade, if any, less transparent. Dr. Schweitzer's Silbermann, on the other hand, seems more solid and heavy. But all of these sets are headline news — at last it is possible to listen with pleasure to organ records.

### One of Thirty-seven

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

Please accept my thanks and congratulations for publishing Mr. Leland L. Chapman's article, *The Alignment of the Pick-Up*. You have put all phonograph users into your debt by this splendid public service. The article itself is well done, the diagrams are even better, and as you say, no intelligent record user should be without a copy. This article has been crying to be written for a good many years.

Yours very truly,

HAROLD C. BRAINERD

Cambridge, Mass. November 11, 1937

# Modern Gramophone Recording

By DONALD W. ALDOUS, M. Inst. E.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In the June 1937 issue an article by Mr. Aldous, our English correspondent, on the manufacture (that is, processing) of gramophone records was included and this month we present a technical description of modern recording practice, as exemplified by the equipment and methods of His Master's Voice (H. M. V.) studios of London.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**A**T St. John's Wood, London, are situated the recording studios of The Gramophone Company, Ltd., (H. M. V.). These studios, which were opened in November, 1931, have been especially built for gramophone recording and in this respect are probably unique, for most recording studios are conversions from existing buildings.

There are four studios, all of which were acoustically designed for the requirements of gramophone recording; they vary in size from the small No. 4 Talks Studio to the No. 1 Orchestral Studio, which can accommodate at least two hundred performers on the raised stage and about seven hundred more, say, vocalists on the floor. The acoustics of the large studios can be varied for different types of performance by the use of huge damping curtains and movable screens. The walls of the studios are 14 inches thick and uneven to prevent echo and undesired transmission of sounds; as a further precaution against a performance in one studio interfering with that going on in another, no studios are adjacent, as corridors intervene.

In the large studios up to four microphones can be used simultaneously, usually arranged in a special formation to obtain a certain effect. The microphones employed are of the moving-coil type, with their field-windings energized from accumulators; the field-strength is adjusted to a pre-determined value, for it governs to an extent the frequency characteristic. The frequency response of these microphones is from about 35 to 10,000 c. p. s. (cycles per second).

Adjoining each studio is its recording room, in which are two recording machines. Communication between the studio staff and artists and the recording engineers is possible by means of a small double-window looking on to the studio. It is now perhaps

opportune to state the routine of a recording session. After such important details as the length of playing-time, balance of orchestra and singers, etc., have been attended to, one buzz from a hooter fixed over the double-window indicates "Get ready," two buzzes indicate "Silence" (as the run-in grooves are being cut), then the red light appears both inside and outside the studio and the artists commence their performance. At the end of the composition, silence must be maintained until the red light is switched off; usually several test records are made in this manner, improvements can be made in the placing of the singers or certain of the instruments to get better balance or prevent "blasting", and so forth. This play-back ruins the wax blank and is done only with test blanks. After the necessary alterations have been completed, the procedure outlined above is repeated and a "master" blank is cut (recorded).

To return to the recording room itself: the wax recording blanks are generally stored in containers in a thermostatically controlled heating cupboard within this machine room. The cupboard is kept at a constant temperature, the actual temperature being dependent on the nature of the wax but it is usually between 72 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit, in order to maintain the wax blanks at the right degree of softness for cutting. Since the room temperature is roughly that of the store cupboard, when the wax blank is put on the recording turntable the heat radiated from an electric lamp immediately above it is sufficient to keep the wax at the correct consistency for the few minutes taken to complete the cutting.

The two recording machines are placed each side of the double communicating window; above the windows are four small panels and meters that control the supply of field current to the microphones. Two similar panels at the lower corners of the window are associated with the moving-coil recorders (cutting heads). Directly below the window is a panel containing the mixing and fading controls to each separate microphone, a special tone-correction system, and a main volume control calibrated in decibels. A monitor loudspeaker is provided, through which the recording engineer can hear, and so



check aurally, the exact sounds that he is cutting on to the wax.

The recording bath, mounted on felt pads to prevent vibration affecting the cutting-stylus, have their heavy turntables driven by a gravity motor, i. e., power developed by a falling weight; especially designed governors hold the speed of rotation constant at 78 r. p. m. A 76-lb. weight is suspended on wire through pulleys fastened to the ceiling and so passes down into the recording machine. This weight has to be wound up to the ceiling before a recording commences. It might seem to be a retrograde step to use this primitive form of motion but all other types of motors have been experimented with and the gravity motor was found to be the only type that assured constancy of speed. Of course, electric motors are suitable for most recording purposes.

The recording head is fixed and the turntable, drawn across by a lead screw, traverses the rotating wax blank under it radially and so traces an Archimedean spiral in the wax, usually with 100 convolutions to the inch; this figure may be altered to, say, 78, 86 up to 150-200 grooves to the inch, the figure depending mainly on the playing time required. The standard cut is from 86-100 lines (grooves) to the inch, generally around the latter figure; the 150-200 grooves-to-the-inch cut is for long-playing records, in which the amplitude of the low frequencies is considerably reduced or the "loudness" of the record diminished, that is, the "scratch-to-music" ratio is increased or, in other words, the speech-to-noise (S/N) ratio is decreased. It should be understood that in some machines the recording head is moved across the rotating wax instead of being fixed and the turntable moving, as already referred to, but in both methods gears enable the cutting head to produce the varying groove distances required. A micrometer feed gives adjustment for the depth of cut and the unit as a whole is counterbalanced.

Typical dimensions of the cut on the standard commercial laterally recorded disc are: average width of groove - 0.006 in. — average groove - wall width or "land" 0.004 in., and average depth of groove — 0.0025 in.

## New Music

By HARRISON POTTER

RECENT publications from the Oxford University Press continue to show the enterprising spirit and discriminating taste of that house.

Songs by Vaughan Williams, Norman Peterkin, Edmund Duncan-Rubbra and others indicate maintenance of the high standards one always expects from Oxford.

Outstanding are Vaughan Williams' "*See the chariot at hand*, a worthy setting of Ben Jonson's poem, and adapted from Williams' opera, *Sir John in Love*. The song has a Gaelic grace and flavor, a fine melodic line, and will be a welcome addition to the mezzo-soprano and baritone repertoire.

Vaughan Williams' settings of *Six English Folk Songs* and *Two French Folk Songs* are done with fine restraint and are definitely worth while, and his *The Twilight People* (poem by Seumas O'Sullivan) has a quiet beauty and individuality characteristic of the composer.

In very different mood Norman Peterkin has given us an amusing song in *Little Red Hen*, a rhythmic and very singable setting of a gently satirical folk tale translated from the Irish by J. P. McCall.

A cycle of ten songs for tenor voice by Gerald Finzi, called *A Young Man's Exhortation*, (poems by Thomas Hardy) is of uneven interest and value, somewhat monotonous in style, but containing two songs particularly useful as separate program songs, *Budmouth Dears* in jolly stirring march rhythm, and the exciting and somewhat macabre *Transformations*.

Edmund Duncan-Rubbra has contributed a very lovely setting of Shelley's *A widow-bird sat mourning* and Harold Darke's *I love all beauteous things* (poem by Robert Bridges) has a fine simplicity of style.

Mention should also be made of Cyril Taylor's *Three Christmas Songs* which have more than a seasonal interest. Also Patrick Hadley's *So we'll go no more a-roving* and Irvin Hinchcliffe's *Green Rain*, both useful and attractive songs.

More than passing attention should be given to the excellent collection of *Newfoundland Folk Songs* with accompaniments by Vaughan Williams, Clive Carey, Hubert J. Foss and Michael Mullinar. These very beautiful songs from a hitherto unexploited field are published in two volumes, each containing a section devoted to ballads and one to songs.

The great charm of the songs has not been obscured by the over-elaboration of accompaniments too frequently found in arrangements of folk-songs.

The collection was made and edited by Maude Karpeles, and is a valuable contribution to folk-song literature.



# Through a Dealer's Eyes

By A. J. FRANCK

As a dealer in records, I have perhaps an unusual advantage in observing the uses to which recorded music is put in the service not only of cultural enjoyment, but of study, research and other objectives, as well. It occurs to me, therefore, that a presentation of some of these uses might prove to be not merely entertaining, but quite possibly suggestive to some who might employ with profit some of the ideas described.

Although the musical world has not altogether completely conceded the fact, the user of records is an infinitely stronger potential factor in the shaping of musical history than is generally recognized. While the mass of musical people has not yet sufficiently apprehended the full measure of intrinsic musical value in records, the real leaders in musical endeavor in this and other countries have quite definitely accepted records as a most valuable adjunct to their work. It is not surprising, therefore, that a composer-member of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, for example, chose to exhibit one of his *opera* to a select gathering in a Philadelphia garret by means of phonograph records made privately in Hungary. It was a scene for Rembrandt, who "taught light to counterfeit the gloom." On another occasion, a charming lady identified with the same body journeyed to Long Island for — what do you think?—phonograph records of little known Russian church music to be incorporated into one of Dr. Stokowski's incomparable Christmas programs.

Instances of this sort are barely a beginning. The extraordinarily competent and progressive Oklahoma City Chamber Music Ensemble finds it excellent to own an extensive library of records of works within its field. A renowned Wisconsin piano teacher is one of many who uses records for the edification of his pupils. A piano teacher in western New York concurs in this practice, while a professor at the Tokyo conservatory has re-

corded a faultless set of Czerny's Op. 849 for the guidance of the more advanced students.

Is it limited to pianists? By no means. A nineteen-year-old girl played three violin solos on the Major Bowes Amateur Hour. She claimed to have learned them from the phonograph records of the same selections: namely, *Hejre Kati* (Hubay) as played by Maud Powell, *Hora Staccato* (Dinicu-Heifetz) as played by Jascha Heifetz and *The Old Refrain* (Kreisler) as played by Kreisler. She stated that she imitated the artists by playing the solos as interpreted by them, even playing the violin along with the phonograph records. That isn't exactly a novel idea. Many a singer has profited by singing with records. Tenors are the bane of one music house which also sells records. They borrow the music at one counter, the records at another, and retire to a booth to bellow with the phonograph. Emerging after a half-hour or so, they return music and records, and the cash register rings "no sale."

How much some cornetists and trombonists owe to Professor Pechin and to the peerless Jaroslaw Cimerá for their recorded courses is beyond calculation. These were among the best of many recorded courses that taught everything from banjo up.

A young man who won both state and national flute contests this year was guided in his playing of the winning selection by a masterly performance of it on a phonograph record obtained for him by his accompanist. A young Texas clarinetist won first honors in a state contest with a solo coached by a record. He is now soloist with a college band in his own state. A cornetist of exceptional ability confided that he has worked up more solos with the help of cornet records than he did when he was taking regular instruction. He recommends the use of phonograph records to those who desire to improve either their playing or singing; especially when the best teachers are not accessible.

Is this all? Lord, no! It is history that the record collection of the Stephen Foster Memorial in Pittsburgh proved to be one of the most engrossing departments conducted by Foster Hall before Dr. Lilly presented the collection to the University of Pittsburgh. Mr. Hodges, curator of the collection, discovered the almost unbelievable penetration of Foster music into the remotest regions of the earth by means of the records which had been obtained for him.

Records are being used by an American authoress in connection with her forthcoming book on American Negro songs to trace their relation to authentic African prototypes. It is, of course, a recognized fact that much that passes for Negro music in these days isn't even negroid. True Negro music is rarely heard except among the colored people of the old South, and is usually not sung if white people are present. The book should be a revelation to those to whom rare flavors in music make an irresistible appeal.

Uses of records in ethnology are numerous, but it is not my purpose to cite the uses of records in this or the dozens of other "ologies." That field is too vast. Indeed, I need add but one more case to this list, and that is of the Clevelanders, almost a nonagenarian, who has found the fountain of perpetual youth in a lusty pursuit of ancient and obsolete operatic records.\* A hobby that maintains the mental and nervous health of hundreds of enthusiasts the world over, in his case confers the freshness and eagerness that many a man in his forties might envy. The next time your wife or mother catches you in the act of smuggling "another record" into the house in the folds of the evening paper, call her attention to this. Women are by no means destitute of reason, and this case is most impressive.

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

In the November issue of *The American Music Lover* you speak of difficulties in procuring information in regard to the French composer, Maurice Jaubert. In January 1933, M. Jaubert completed a work which he gave the title of *Suite Francais*, and dedicated this composition to Vladimir Golschmann, the conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Upon the occasion of its performance in November 1933, the program notes of the St. Louis Symphony Society furnished the following information:

Maurice Jaubert — born January 3, 1900 at Nice. Now living at Paris.

At thirty-three, Maurice Jaubert occupies a distinguished position in the European world of music,

\*See: *A New Hobby* at 87, by Charles A. Post in the August, 1937 issue.

and is now becoming well-known in America from the success of his incidental music for the Rene Clair cinema production, *The Fourteenth of July*.

Originally destined for a career in the law, Jaubert, while preparing for that profession, studied also piano, harmony and counterpoint in the Conservatoire of his native Nice. After practicing at the bar for two years, he abandoned the legal profession in 1923, and removed to Paris to embark on a career as a composer. His first important work was a musical setting for Calderon's drama, *The Prodigious Magician*, which was presented in Paris in 1925. He has composed many songs; a *Suite* for cello and piano; an opera in two acts upon a poem by Georges Neveux; a Choreographic Poem, *Le Jour*, to a text by Jules Supervielle, which was presented for the first time in December, 1931, by the Symphony Orchestra of Paris, Pierre Monteux conducting. He is deeply interested in the movies, and has written incidental music for many cinema productions.

I hope that this information will be of use to you in the event of further Jaubert recordings.

Yours very truly,

JAMES E. MILLAN

St. Louis, Mo. November 6, 1937

## On Singers and Reviews

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

Since becoming acquainted with *The American Music Lover* through my specimen copy, I have enjoyed the unusually fine reviews of various recordings of new releases by the major phonograph companies.

One thing particularly I note from your reviews, which is rare, is that you actually admit that some previous recording of an operatic or symphonic work is superior to the one in question, of course not considering the superior mechanical side of the latter. I also note that you do not put too much emphasis on the engineering side of the record but place interpretation and sincerity before all else. On too many present day recordings too much is taken for granted in the lifelike quality of the recording and not enough in the dramatic expression and emotional warmth. Such artists as Mengelberg, D'Alvarez, von Schilling, Schumann and Matzenauer gained their knowledge of interpretation through experience and patient learning and not in a jiffy through instant popularity.

In many issues of your magazine I find reference to the absence of Bruna Castagna on records when other inferior, pretty singers are recorded, feted and signed to fabulous radio contracts. Many of us heard Miss Castagna during her Hippodrome days and are quite aware of her excellent Carmen, Mignon, Amneris, Delilah and other outstanding contralto roles. Miss Castagna is a singer of the old school of real singing, and if she is not converted over to the modern school of shape minus voice, will become a great name in music history.

Best wishes to your magazine and what it contains each month. The articles are intelligent, interesting and very helpful.

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL J. BLOCK

Brooklyn, N. Y. October 8th, 1937

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have been given to understand that Mme. Castagna is to make some recordings in the near future for Victor.

# OVERTONES

## Bloch's Violin Sonata

**VICTOR** announces early issues of two of Ernest Bloch's most important chamber works: his *Partita* for viola and his *Sonata* for violin and piano. The former work is to be performed by William Primrose, the celebrated English violist who, since the retirement of Lionel Tertis, must be ranked as the foremost player on this instrument before the public at the present time.

The *Sonata* is to be played by Josef Gingold, a noted Ysaye pupil who is associated with the Kreiner Quartet, and Beryl Rubinstein, the American pianist, who is now dean of the Institute of Musical Art in Cleveland. Theirs is a performance well worth awaiting, since their extraordinary artistic gifts are perfectly suited to Bloch's music.

## Schnabel's New Recordings

Schnabel and the London Symphony, direction of Sargent, have recorded Mozart's *Piano Concerto in C major*, K. 467. This is an important first recording.

Schnabel has also recorded Schubert's *Piano Sonata in A major*, a posthumous work.

## New Mozart Recordings

Perhaps the most important news of the month is the fact that Beecham has recorded Mozart's *G minor Symphony*, K-550. It is a curious fact, but this symphony, one of the most popular and beloved in the concert repertory, has never been successfully presented on records, so we are certain that all music lovers will look forward to an early release of Beecham's recording by Columbia.

\* \* \*

An early symphony of Mozart, No. 28 in *C major*, K-200, has been recorded by the Berlin College of Instrumentalists (evidently a chamber orchestra) under the direction of Fritz Stein. It will be remembered that this symphony was recorded by the National Gramophonic Society in the early days of electrical recording under the direction of Mr. Barbirolli.

The Mozart Chamber Music Society has issued a second set of the composer's violin sonatas played by Lili Krauss and Simon Goldberg. Since the latest set is issued by English Columbia, instead of Parlophone as the first set was, we may expect to have it reissued in this country at an early date. The new album contains three sonatas: the *F major*, K-377; the *B flat*, K-378, and the *E flat*, K-380.

\* \* \*

Mozart seems to be widely favored of late. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Viscount Hidemar Konoye, the Japanese conductor, has added to the composer's long list of recordings his *Concertante Sinfonia in E flat*, K-297b, for four wind instruments — oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon — and strings. This is a Columbia recording.

## Re: Hofmann Recordings

The announcement on page 248 of the November issue that RCA-Victor has signed Josef Hofmann for a series of recordings has been denied by that company. We apologize to Mr. Hofmann and to RCA-Victor.

## Bach Society Set No. 3

Dr. Albert Schweitzer has made his third set for the Bach Organ Society. This album contains seven discs which bear the following compositions: *Prelude and Fugue in C minor*, *Prelude and Fugue in E minor*, *Prelude and Fugue in C major*, and *Fugue in A minor*.

## Walter and Haydn

Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra continue their series of recordings with Haydn's *Symphony No. 96 in D major*.

## Wood, Szigeti and Flesch

Sir Henry Wood and the Queen's Hall Orchestra continue their recordings of music out of the beaten track with Dohnanyi's *Symphonische Minuetten*, *Opus 36*; and Joseph Szigeti and Carl Flesch unite with orchestra under the direction of W. Goehr in a performance of Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins in D minor*.

# Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in this Issue: NATHAN BRODER. A. P. DeWEESE. PAUL GIRARD,

PHILIP MILLER, PETER HUGH REED — Guest Reviewer: HENRY S. GERSTLE

## ORCHESTRA

BACH (freely transcribed by Stokowski): *Passacaglia in C minor*; *My Soul Is Athirst* from *Passion According to St. Matthew*; *My Jesus In Gethsemane*; *Chorale* from *Easter Cantata - Christ lag im Todesbanden*; *Sarabande* from *First Partita* for unaccompanied violin; and *Aria* from *Suite No. 3 in D major*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Mr. Stokowski. Victor set M-401, one 10-inch disc and four 12-inch discs, price \$9.50.

WHETHER one likes or dislikes Mr. Stokowski's transcriptions of Bach, one must admit that he has done much toward making Bach's music better known and appreciated by the masses. The most notable transcriptions which this provocative conductor has made are those of the organ works. Many of the others, like transcriptions of the *Chaconne* from the *Second Partita* for unaccompanied violin and the *Sarabande* in this album set, are, despite the fact that they are effective orchestral compositions, no longer works by Bach but compositions by Mr. Stokowski based upon those by Bach. The purist still decries this sort of business, but the music loving public endorses it, so the criticism of the purist seems to be wasted.

Unquestionably Stokowski's greatest accomplishment as a transcriber of Bach is his arrangement of the *Passacaglia*. It is therefore fitting, in view of recent recording progress, that this notable orchestral transcription be re-recorded at this time. Those who own the first issue of this work will definitely want the newer one, for it possesses greater clarity of detail, a wider range of dynamics, and nuances which the first recording does not own.

From the fourth Church Cantata, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, Stokowski presents an eloquent and moving treatment of the chorale melody. This is not to be confused with Stokowski's arrangement of the organ chorale prelude (Victor disc 7437) of the same name.

The transcriptions of the hymn, *My Jesus in Gethsemane* from the notebook of Anna

Magdalena Bach, and of the chorale *My Soul Is Athirst*, from the *Passion According to St. Matthew*, could not have been effectively recorded a few years back, for they are played softly throughout. From the standpoint of recording, these two pieces are the most remarkable in the album. The fervor and eloquence of the music, the clarity of its line, is never lost, despite the fact that the orchestra is consistently subdued.

Less impressive is Mr. Stokowski's transcription of the *Aria* from the *D major Suite*. For here we have a sentimentalized arrangement of music deeply felt, arbitrarily divided between the cellos and the violins — music that Bach intended to be played more simply and purely. In the complete recording of the *Suite* made by Adolf Busch and his chamber orchestra, Bach's intentions are adhered to; and, despite Busch's slow tempo, his version is, in our estimation, preferable.

For sheer gorgeousness of orchestral sound these recordings are truly in a class by themselves.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

BERLIOZ: *Roman Carnival Overture, Opus 9*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc, No. 12135, price \$1.50.

BERLIOZ'S *Roman Carnival Overture* is based on themes from his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. The *allegro vivace* section is founded upon a famous Italian dance form, the *saltarello*. When the opera was first performed Habeneck, the conductor, incurred Berlioz's displeasure by not playing the dance fast enough. Later Habeneck was present when Berlioz played the overture for the first time in public. The fact that Berlioz had had insufficient rehearsals on this work seems to have prompted Habeneck's appearance, for he expected a catastrophe at the concert. But the conductor did not reckon on Berlioz's prowess. In his *Memoirs*, Berlioz tells us "not a mistake occurred. I launched the *allegro* at the whirlwind time of the Tran-

steverine dancers. The public cried 'Bis.' We played the overture over again; it was even better the second time. And as I passed through the green room, where Habeneck stood looking a little disappointed, I just flung these words at him: 'That is how it ought to go!' To which he took care to make no reply.<sup>35</sup>

Berlioz's faith in this music does not seem to have been misapplied, for it has long occupied a conspicuous place in the concert repertory. At the concerts of the Boston 'Pops' it is not unusual for the audience to cheer after Mr. Fiedler's brilliant reading of this music. Fiedler plays the overture in an effective manner, perhaps not as fast in the *allegro* section as the composer desired it, but nevertheless in a brilliant style. Beecham, who recently gave us a more carefully detailed reading of this music, was somewhat overly deliberate in his tempo of the dance section. One can easily believe that the composer would have praised Mr. Fiedler's greater exuberance.

The recording here is splendid. All the percussion instruments, including the elusive triangle and tambourine, are clearly reproduced.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

GERMAN: *Merrie England - Dances*; played by the Orchestre Raymonde, conducted by G. Walter. Ten-inch Columbia, 317-M, price 75c.

SIR EDWARD GERMAN succeeded Sullivan as the leading English composer of operettas. His scores have had a tremendous vogue at home, but abroad only the *Nell Gwyn* and *Henry VIII Dances*, and a few songs, notably *Rolling Down to Rio* and *Love the Pedlar*, have become widely known.

We predict, however, that few listeners will be able to resist the appeal of these dances from *Merrie England*, a light opera set in the times of Elizabeth and Raleigh, that was acclaimed at its premiere in 1902, and that has ever since been a favorite for amateur productions in England. The *Rustic Dance*, the *Jig*, and the *Hornpipe* are vigorous, strongly accented, and saucy, truly Elizabethan in spirit. The *Minuet* is courtly, with a warm emotional undercurrent. All four dances are melodious, and are effectively orchestrated.

The Orchestre Raymonde plays the suite with striking élan and precision; the recording is full and slightly overamplified.

—A. P. D.

BOIELDIEU: *Le Calife de Bagdad, Overture*, and GOUNOD: *Mireille, Overture*; played by the Vienna Symphony, conducted by Paul Kerby. Columbia 69065-D, price \$1.50.

THESE two French overtures are of very different types. That of the *Calife de Bagdad* is decidedly the more captivating. Boieldieu produced this little one-act opera, with text by Saint Just, in 1800, when he was only twenty-five years old and still under Cherubini's influence. The opera won an immediate success, and remained constantly in the repertoire for many years. In spite of its theme, the music, scintillating and full of verve, is purely French, without the slightest Oriental traces. The overture was so popular that, in transcribed form, it became a stock piece for every budding pianist. In form it is a sonata in free style, rather than the usual operatic overture-makeshift. The Vienna Symphony plays with lightness and grace, under Paul Kerby's leadership, and Columbia gives it clear recording.

The *Mireille Overture* is dull in comparison, and never quite manages to get under way. Formally it is a hodge-podge of themes, many of them thin, but pleasant enough in Gounod's rich orchestration. But the total effect is ponderous. Gounod, himself particularly pleased with the opera, tried many revisions to make the work more palatable to the public, but it never won the acclaim that came to so many of his other works. This overture will show that the public was not much in the wrong.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

HUMPERDINCK: *Hansel and Gretel—Overture*; played by the B. B. C. Orchestra, direction Adrian Boult. Victor disc No. 11929, price \$1.50.

HUMPERDINCK'S *Hansel and Gretel* owes much to Wagner. In fact, the latter half of the overture strongly suggests that it was taken over bodily from the score of *Die Meistersinger*. True, this is post-Wagnerian music, so the marked influence is not astonishing. As a matter of fact, however, Humperdinck did not plagiarize from Wagner, but instead employed his mode of orchestration.

This overture begins and ends with the prayer sung by the children in the second act of the opera. The quicker section is drawn from the witch's spell. All the themes that comprise this music are drawn from the opera.



Richard Strauss once said of *Hansel and Gretel* that it was full of "fresh humor and charming "naive melody," and that it had "fine invention" and "splendid polyphony." On December 23 of this year *Hansel and Gretel* will be forty-four years old. It was first produced, with success, at Weimar on December 23, 1893. No one ever seems to think of the age of this charming score, however, for it is just as appealing today as ever.

Boult gives us a straight-forward reading of this music, the recording of which is excellently accomplished. The wider range of dynamics in the reproduction here makes this disc more desirable than any previous recording of the overture.

—P. G.

\* \* \* \* \*

LOCATELLI: *Concerto Grosso, Opus 1, No. 2* (three sides); PERGOLESI: *Concertino in F minor* (three sides); and K. STAMITZ: *Quartet in F major* for string orchestra; played by the New York Simfonietta, direction Max Goberman. Timely Records, set No. 2-R, four discs, price \$8.

HAVING had a hand in the making of this set of three 18th century chamber orchestra works, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I announce its advent, and the fact that it has been so successfully realized by one of the youngest and most gifted conductors contributing music to the phonograph. (The "R" placed after the set number signifies my recommendation of the music.) Timely, whose enterprising vision brought us the *Eight Symphonies* of William Boyce last month, now brings us a first album set of three 18th century sinfoniettas.

Although all three composers here are regarded as important influences in varying degrees from a historical standpoint, this album must not be dismissed simply as being of historical value. For the music represented here is most enjoyable for its own sake. And, since its spontaneity and freshness are attested in the performances, its significance as a contribution to recorded music can not be denied. Mr. Goberman is to be congratulated on his clarity of style, his realization of the rhythmic patterns, the sparkle and the nuances of the music. When one considers that the New York Simfonietta is an organization assembled by Mr. Goberman simply for Timely's recording purposes, what he has done with this group must be considered remarkable. To say that the performances are free from minor blemishes would be incorrect, but these are fortunately few and inconsequential.

The three works hardly need outlining; they are each in three movements and built upon the pattern: a fast movement, a slow section, and a quick finale — yet the works are sufficiently contrasted to form an ideal program of early symphonic music. The Locatelli is quite brilliant and somewhat Corellian in character, which is understandable, for Locatelli was an outstanding pupil of Corelli. The Pergolesi is more contemplative music, and shows his fondness for long-drawn-out melodies; while the Stamitz is sparkling and vivacious with a bucolic, Haydnesque flavor.

The recording is satisfying.

—P. H. R.

## CONCERTOS

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 1 in C major, Opus 15*; played by Walter Giesecking with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, direction Hans Rosbaud. Columbia set No. 308, four discs, price \$6.00.

WHEN two pianists as gifted as Schnabel and Giesecking both offer recordings of the same work, opinions are bound to differ on the relative merits of each man's performance. There is no question in my mind that both of these pianists' performances of the *C major Concerto* are enjoyable, and are outstanding in more ways than one. Preference will be largely governed by individual opinion, and if I say I prefer the Schnabel performance it does not mean that I could not consistently admire the other upon repeated occasions. And I am certain that if the Schnabel set were not available I would be content to own this newer one and would enjoy it, whenever the mood was upon me to hear this music, without regretting the loss of the other.

Giesecking plays this concerto in a more gracious manner than Schnabel, and the whole recording is conceived and executed in a more personal manner than is Schnabel's performance; the effect of intimacy gained in the present set is undoubtedly due to the fact that a smaller orchestra is used. All of which has its advantages and disadvantages. One might say that the Giesecking recording aims to capture the mood of a performance such as Beethoven himself might have heard, while that of the Schnabel performance is one conformable to modern concert hall conditions.

There is greater beauty in Giesecking's first movement than in Schnabel's, but the orchestra is not as certain of itself as is the London Symphony. One should not, however, blame



this entirely upon Herr Rosbaud, who has proved himself an able leader, for it is doubtful whether the orchestra was over-familiar with this music, and if it lags in one or two places behind the conductor's beat it is quite possible that other elements of the performance, such as Gieseeking's own playing, were taken into consideration in the passing of the various matrices.

The *Largo*, so richly ornamented, fares well under both pianists' hands. But Schnabel seems more searching here; he spaces the music a shade on the slow side (he takes three sides in his recording to Gieseeking's two). The biting wit of the main theme of the rondo is better set forth by Schnabel's crisp tone and greater brilliancy. The movement, marked *allegro scherzando*, is replete with youthful verve and zest, and this Schnabel catches and conveys, in my estimation, in the ideal manner. Gieseeking plays in a style more suitable to Mozart here than to Beethoven, and too his tempo in this movement is a little slow (he takes three sides to Schnabel's two). The music calls for more verve and bite than he obtains.

Beethoven's *First Concerto* dates from 1798. It is a youthful work, somewhat Haydnesque in character, but with enough of the early Beethoven spirit and strength to remove it from the category of the merely imitative. It was really the second in order of composition, as the *B flat major Concerto* preceded it in order of composition although it bears a later opus number.

The recording here is consistently good, and so too is the piano tone. One curious feature of Gieseeking's performance, mentioned in the notes to the set, is the omission of a short cadenza in the last movement.

—P. H. R.

**BRAHMS:** *Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77*; played by Fritz Kreisler and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of John Barbirolli. Victor set M-402, nine sides, price \$9.00.

**THE** glamour of Kreisler's name is not upheld in this performance. Despite the fact that one cannot deny his grasp of structure and his fine sense of rhythm, one misses much of the old assurance of this great violinist in his re-recording of the Brahms *Concerto*. And his lapses from pitch now and again are points forgotten in a concert hall performance but unfortunately remembered in a recording.

It may be that most music lovers will still find Szigeti's recorded performance of this work the most satisfying. There is a new one

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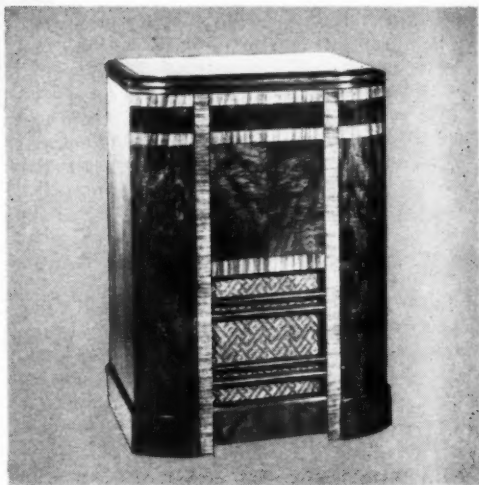
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by George Kulenkampff with the Berlin Philharmonic, a Telefunken recording, which we are waiting to hear to make some comparisons. With Kulenkampff's performance unheard we are still inclined to doubt that he could interpret the lovely second movement better than Kreisler. Here, Kreisler transcends Szigeti, for his tone is richer and his feeling for the music deeper and his playing more persuasive. Szigeti in the outer movements achieves greater clarity of detail, and one never feels with him that he is unhappy at the technical difficulties which Joachim, for whom the concerto was originally written, undoubtedly saw to that Brahms included in his first and last movements.

This recording was made a little over a year ago. It was released in England in October, 1936. Critical reception of the set was lukewarm, despite the splendid recording. As I pointed out above, in the concert hall one can praise a great artist and enjoy him even when he is not at his greatest, but in a recording his manifest off-moments are inescapable, for repetition unfortunately indelibly imprints them on the memory.

There is great dignity in the opening moments of this concerto, and yet I have never felt that it represented Brahms at his best. Much that goes on is simply pyrotechnics for the violinist. One recalls von Bülow's famous wisecrack: Bruch wrote a concerto *for* the violin and Brahms a concerto *against* the violin. I have never heard what von Bülow had to say, if anything, about Brahms' *Double Concerto*, *Opus 102*. Tovey tells us that Hubermann says that "Brahms' Concerto is neither *against* the violin, nor *for* violin with orchestra; but it is a concerto *for* violin *against* orchestra — and the violin wins." The first movement is over long, taking fully 20 minutes with the cadenza (occupying five sides of the recording). Brahms, it would seem, could have dispensed with a cadenza at the end, for he provided, with Joachim's help, plenty of technical virtuosity during the movement proper, but I suspect that the soloist would feel cheated without the extra display of dexterity. Mr. Kreisler plays his own cadenza, instead of Joachim's. I must decline to make comparisons because I am opposed to cadenzas on general principle, and I inevitably sit back and try to forget patterns and form when I come to them in the concert hall and likewise in recordings.

The lovely slow movement and the spirited finale each take two sides in the recording. Brahms contrasted his material cleverly, and these shorter movements are fittingly timed

after the long-drawn-out first movement. The poetic beauty of the second section is really a welcome respite after what has gone on before. And Kreisler makes us fully aware of this.

—P. H. R.

## ORGAN

EARLY ORGAN MUSIC, Volume 1—LANDINO: *Bench'ora piove*; FROBERGER: *Canzone in D minor*; HOFHAIMER: *Fantasia on "On freudt verzer"*; CABEZON: *Diferencias sobre El Canto del Caballero*; COUPERIN: *Fugue on the Kyrie*; BYRD: *Miserere*; SWEELINCK: *Fantasia in Echo Style*; TITELOUZE: *Ave Maria stella*; PACHELBEL: *Choral Prelude*, and *Fugue in A minor*; BUXTEHUDE: *Two Choral Preludes*; played by Carl Weinrich on the organ of the Westminster Choir School, Princeton. Musicraft set No. 9, four discs, price \$6.50.

**F**OR character and quality of tone, these are assuredly among the finest organ recordings ever made. There may be some who will ignore this album set on the assumption that it is important only from a historical standpoint, but we do not think that those who make the effort to hear it will assume that attitude. It is true that some of the compositions included here are less interesting than others, and two pieces, in our estimation—the Landino and Titelouze ones—are somewhat pedantic and dull in character; yet many of them, notably those by Byrd, Sweelinck and Buxtehude, are genuinely beautiful works, and even the others are worthy of the perpetuation given them here.

Carl Weinrich proves himself to be one of the most enjoyable organists to make records to date. His clearly outlined readings, his firm sonorities and shadings, and his rhythmic enunciations are particularly praiseworthy.

Regarding the various composers represented here: Landino was a 14th-century Florentine, whom musicologists consider of great importance. It is unfortunate that the two-part song by which he is represented here does not seem to be a fair sample of his work. The German Hofhaimer (1459-1537), an important figure in his day, was highly regarded and was the recipient of many honors. Very few of his compositions survive; the present one, the notes to this set inform us, found its way into organ literature by way of a manuscript in Vienna. Cabezon (1510-1566) was a celebrated blind composer to Philip II of Spain. He is considered one

of the earliest composers for keyboard instruments and also one of the greatest Spanish composers. The work of his recorded here is a particularly enjoyable one. Couperin, the 16th-century Frenchman, hardly needs introduction. Although reputed to be a fine organist, he is better known as a composer of works for the clavecin.

William Byrd (1543-1623), one of England's greatest composers, also should need no introduction. Perhaps a word on Sweelinck might be appropriate. His genius brought Amsterdam into prominence during the latter part of the 16th century. He was a renowned player and teacher, and is said to be the inventor of the fugue. Every Sweelinck recording is decidedly worth owning. Titelouze (1563-1637) has been termed "the father of organ music in France." His greatness or essential worth should not be judged by the selection recorded here. Froberger (1616-1667) was German-born, but after studying under Frescobaldi in Rome, he later settled in France. He was a famous harpsichordist as well as organist. Pachelbel, late 17th century, was "one of the pioneers in the competent development of the chorale-prelude." He is said to have influenced Bach. Buxtehude (1637-1707) was the greatest organ composer prior to Bach. His influence upon the latter has been described as "profoundly stimulating." Every Buxtehude recording is also decidedly worth owning.

—P. H. R.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in C sharp minor*, Op. 131; played by the Busch Quartet. Victor Album M-369, 5 discs. Price \$10.

IF the last quartets of Beethoven are no longer considered "eccentric," to mention one of the milder adjectives used by some of the master's contemporaries, and if much of their seeming harshness and severity has mellowed in the century that has elapsed since their creation, they still present problems to the attentive listener. And here once more the occasion arises to express gratitude for the invaluable boon of the modern phonograph. For it is only by constant repetition that we can familiarize ourselves with so difficult a score as the C sharp minor quartet, and it is only after every note in each movement has been stamped into our minds that we can begin to perceive the inner logic that binds this seemingly wilful succession of contrasted parts together. But when we have gained that familiarity, how rich are



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The C sharp minor quartet was composed in 1826. It was completed a short time after its two sister quartets, in A minor, Op. 132 and B flat, Op. 130. Op. 131 is in seven connected movements, of which only the fourth (a theme with variations), the fifth (a scherzo), and the seventh (a movement in sonata form) are cast into more or less conventional forms. The effect of the whole work is of a gigantic improvisation, but we learn from Nottbohm that the preliminary studies for Op. 131 are eloquent proof of Beethoven's mighty labors, for the sketches occupy three times the space taken by the finished score.

Three previous recordings of this composition are extant — by the Leners, the Rosés, and Capets. Of these only the Lener version is worthy of comparison with the present set. The Lener performance is very good indeed, in some respects — as in unity of ensemble and quality of tone — even superior to the Busch. But the scope of the Lener version is relatively small; the players do not penetrate very far below the surface; they miss the spiritual exaltation of the sixth variation of the fourth movement; where they should be rugged they are merely mellifluous; and finally, some find the tone of their first violin a little too sweet and rather pinched.

The Busches adopt more deliberate tempi in the slow sections, thus creating sharper contrast with the fast ones. While the Lener performance is slightly capricious, that of the Busches is sober. The Busches dig deeper and soar higher. Their canvas is a broader one. I believe that their version of this quartet will wear better in the long run.

—N. B.

\* \* \*

K. STAMITZ: *Quartet for Clarinet and Strings in E flat major, Opus 8, No. 4*; played by the Oxford Ensemble (Weber, clarinet; Neidell, violin; Witz, viola; Bil-

stin, cello). Two 10-inch Musicraft discs, Nos. 205-206, price \$2.00.

**KARL STAMITZ'S** father Johann, one of the founders of the famous Mannheim school, is considered an important figure in musical history. He is said to have exerted a wide influence by his attention to contrasts and nuances in performance, and is marked by historians as a pioneer of symphonic design. Karl was a pupil of his father's. He was a renowned player on both the violin and the viola d'amore. He wrote many orchestral compositions and was also active in the field of chamber music.

The present work, the only complete one by any of the Stamitz family on records to date, is a particularly ingratiating one, conforming in pattern to better known 18th-century chamber compositions. It was very popular in its day, and was published in several editions. It is in three movements: an opening *allegro*, which is an elaborately worked out section and the longest part (taking both sides of disc 205 in the recording); an *andante*, somewhat Mozartean in its plaintive character; and a rondo which is light and capricious.

The Oxford Ensemble, a radio group which specializes in old music, gives a nicely rounded, straightforward performance of this music; and the recording has been neatly and effectively managed.

Those who like early music will do well to hear this recording. —P. G.

## PIANO

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in B flat Major (Hammerklavier), Opus 106*; played by Artur Schnabel. Victor set M-403, six discs, price \$12.00.

**I**N our April issue we reviewed this recording of the *Hammerklavier Sonata* along with the one made by Wilhelm Kempff. At that time, we pointed out that we thought Schnabel's performance of the first movement was considered on the whole, more dramatic, more intense than Kempff's, but not without some technical defects, and that his reading of the long, searching slow movement was more revelatory and inspired.

We also pointed out that Schnabel takes 12 sides in his recording while Kempff takes ten, and that the piano tone was better in the Kempff set.

Kempff gives an accurate performance of this great work, one clearly outlined and carefully balanced. It cannot be said however that he is as great an artist as Schnabel.



But Schnabel, with all his grand style is often guilty of technical flaws and a Teutonic pedantry which is frequently devitalizing to the flow of the music. The choice of performance in this case will unquestionably be governed by personal taste and by what one wishes to spend. Because of the accuracy of Kempff's performance, and the superior reproduction of piano tone, we have found enjoyment in it.

—P. H. R.

FAURE: *Nocturne, No. 4, in E flat, Op. 36; Barcarolle, No. 6, in E flat, Op. 70*; played by Marguerite Long. Columbia disc. No. 69063-D. price \$1.50.

NOT so long ago Mark Twain's celebrated quip about the weather could with almost equal truth have been applied to Fauré's piano music. Now, happily, someone is doing something about it, and one of the results should certainly be not only increased but more enlightened talking. So far the bulk of the recording has been done by Marguerite Long, and in her understanding hands the composer's music is quite safe. To her and to the French Columbia company let us give a rousing cheer, with more than an echo for the American branch who are making the recordings easily available here.

It seems scarcely possible to speak of the piano works of Fauré without quoting from Alfred Cortot's book on modern French piano music. In it the reader will find so much discussion of the development of Fauré's piano style, of the genesis of each work, and of the poetic content of each, that to write of these things here can be no more than to repeat what has already been better done. Why, one wonders, has this prolific recorder, who can write so eloquently on the subject, not given us one sample of his own playing of these pieces?

The *Fourth Nocturne*, in E flat, belongs to Fauré's earlier piano period, in which grace and formal balance were of themselves sufficient to compensate for the lack of that deeper note which was struck in his later works for this instrument. The *Barcarolle*, No. 6, also in E flat, affords an example of the greater terseness and economy of means which characterize the more mature piano compositions. The *arpeggios*, as Cortot points out, are no longer in any sense mere decoration, but an integral part of the music itself. And, as always in Fauré's instrumental works, the meaning of this music is abstract; because of its very impersonality it makes a definitely personal appeal.

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Like the *Sixth Nocturne*, which Columbia released several months ago, also by Mme. Long, these two works are magnificently played in a style lucid enough to allow them to speak for themselves without any added warmth or sentimentality. And the piano tone is a distinct improvement over the previous disc, where it inclined to be hard and brittle.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

GRIFFES: *Sonata for Piano*; played by Harrison Potter, pianist. Two discs, Nos. 10 and 11.

BLOCH: *Five Sketches in Sepia*; played by Harrison Potter, pianist. Disc No. 12.  
Issued by The Friends of Recorded Music.

**T**HE latest releases of the enterprising Friends of Recorded Music introduce to the gramophonist the young American pianist Harrison Potter, who makes a most auspicious debut on wax. The compositions he has chosen to record make taxing demands upon him, and he has come through triumphantly.

The *Piano Sonata* of the late Charles Tomlinson Griffes is the more important of the two works. The composer was of the opinion that it was the first work of his that was conceived without a doubt in his mind about its worth. He was extremely self-critical, and destroyed many more compositions than he preserved. Would that more composers had done likewise!

A short, defiant introduction leads into a movement built up of the usual two contrasted themes, the second of which is used also in the tranquil and somewhat church-like slow movement which follows without pause. The fleet-footed finale, culminating in a vertiginous *presto*, is the crown of the work.

While hardly a monumental masterpiece, it is forward-looking music; and it sounded a new note in American composition when it was first heard some twenty years ago. It is stark, uncompromising music, without any padding or redundancies; and it retains its vitality remarkably well.

Ernest Bloch's *Five Sketches in Sepia* are a product of a comparatively unfruitful period of the composer's sojourn in this country (in the 1920's) — unfruitful, that is, with the exception of the great *Piano Quintet*. During this period he published in addition only trifles for violin, piano, etc., and two bombastic orchestral works. The lack of weightiness of these pieces is implied in their generic title. Reminding one sometimes of Scriabin in his last period, at others of Schönberg of the *Six Small Piano Pieces*, they are

not representative of the composer's genius at its best. The last piece, which is also the longest, comes nearest to being genuine Bloch; and is undoubtedly the most outstanding of the group.

Like the Griffes *Sonata*, these pieces are rendered with the utmost musical insight and technical perfection by Mr. Potter; while the piano tone (recorded by Musicraft) bears comparison with the best that has ever been caught by the recording cutter.

—H. S. G.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCHUBERT (arr. Cortot): *Litany*; and BACH (arr. Cortot): *Aria from Concerto in F minor*; played by Alfred Cortot, pianist. Victor No. 14612. Price \$2.00.

**H**IS own reverent arrangement of Schubert's lovely song gives Cortot the opportunity for some beautiful piano playing, an opportunity he takes full advantage of. The performance of the Bach is also a lesson in sensitive pianism, although the style seems better suited to something by Schumann than to a work by the Leipzig cantor.

As regards the recording of transcriptions of compositions that are perfectly satisfactory in their own domain when there are many piano works that Cortot could do well still unrecorded—there is something to be said for that sort of thing, as George Jean Nathan used to say, but not by me.

—N. B.

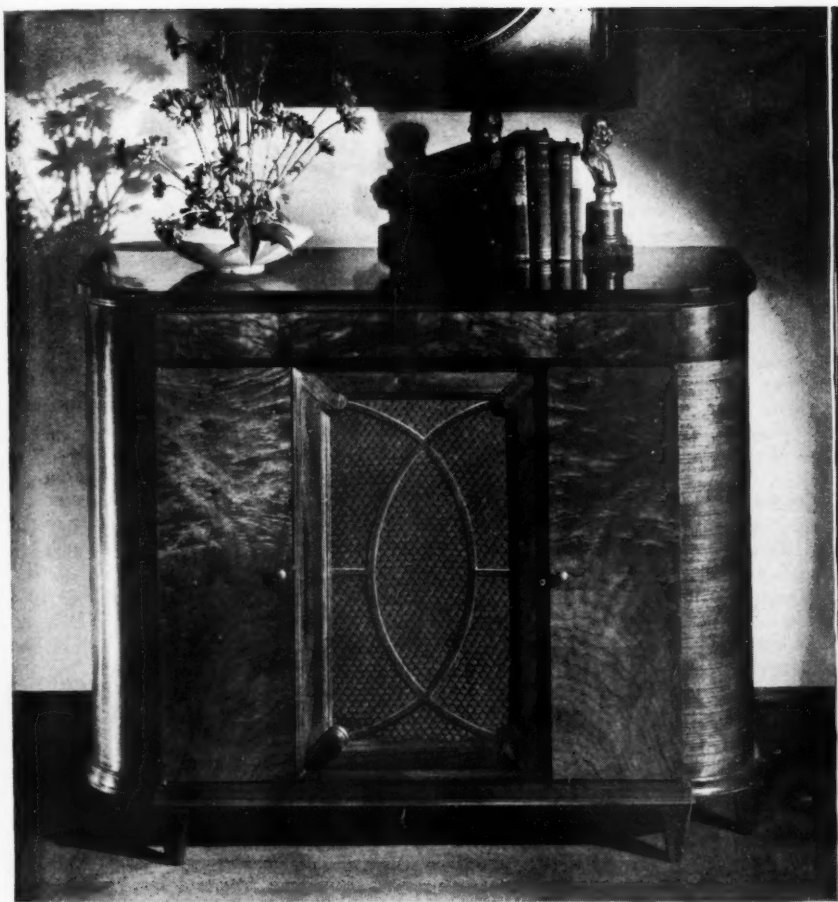
## \* \* \* \* \*

## GUITAR

SOR: *Grand Sonata, Op. 22*; played by Julio Martinez Oyanguren, guitar. Columbia set X-84, price \$3.00.

**C**OLUMBIA and Oyanguren continue to teach us things we didn't know about the guitar. This month's contribution to our education is by far the most ambitious and elaborate lesson so far, in fact its very proportions are not unlikely to intimidate some of the curious who like the guitar in small doses. However, I doubt if any one who plays the first movement can be induced to leave the *Sonata* unfinished.

I suppose there are not many who will question the right of Ferdinand Sor (or José Ferran Sors) to the title of outstanding exponent of his instrument. For he was known internationally in his day not only as a virtuoso without a peer, but as the composer of a goodly proportion of his own repertoire (he was also noted for his operas, ballets, symphonies, quartets and other non-guitar



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music) and as the author of a guitar method which has not yet been forgotten. Born in Barcelona February 14, 1778, he was forced to leave his native country while a young man because of his loyalty to Joseph Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon who reigned for a brief period on the Spanish throne. Sor saw a good deal of Europe in the years that followed, and lived at various times in Paris, Moscow, St. Petersburg and London. He is said to have been the only guitarist ever to appear as soloist with the London Philharmonic. Finally returning to Paris, he died there July 8, 1839.

It is not surprising, in view of his unsettled life and the period in which he lived, that his music should suggest the courts and customs of the European capitals rather than the color and life of his native Spain. This *Sonata* stems directly from those of Haydn and Mozart, with more than a slight suggestion of Beethoven in the slow movement. It is, indeed, the distinctive sound and technique of the guitar which provides its principal point of departure. Formally the work is as clear and smooth as music should be which follows such models, and of course it is magnificently "guitaristic." Written in four movements, *Allegro, Adagio, Menuetto* and *Rondo*, it is by turns graceful, restless, stately and genial.

This recording throws a new light on Mr. Oyanguren, who has not previously elected to come before us as a classical stylist. His success is triumphant except for a moment or two when he clips off his rests a bit too hurriedly. This is a small blemish on a splendid performance, and the recording surpasses even the previous Columbia Oyanguren releases in clarity and realism.

—P. M.

## VOICE

BACH: *Cantata No. 65 — Prends mon coeur (Nimm mich dir zu eigen hin)*; *Cantata No. 85—Ah, quel prodige d'amour (Seht! was die Liebe thut)*; sung by Georges Thill tenor, with orchestra, direction of Gustave Bret. Columbia disc, No. 9135-M price \$1.50.

THE first and only shock which is carried on this disc is the entrance of the voice singing in French. To be sure the labels warn us, but after the finely spirited introduction of *Nimm mich dir zu eigen hin*, done with a proper Bach orchestra, harpsichord and all, it does come as a bit of a jolt to hear Mr. Thill begin "Prends mon coeur, il

t'appartient." When one gets used to this, the record is about as satisfying an experience as has come from the studios in some time. The singer has the sense and good taste to do his part in a straight and open manner — exactly what is needed for a performance as healthy and solid as the music itself. In matters of clarity in passage work, intonation and phrasing, he comes off just slightly under 100%, which is about all we can ask in this generation, and a good deal more than we usually get.

*Seht! was die Liebe thut* receives here its fourth recording. Two of the earlier versions were done by the Hoboken-born Bach tenor, George Walter, whose reputation in Germany is outstanding, and one by Yves Tynaire, in the French series bearing the Lumen label. Of these I am familiar only with Mr. Walter's earlier effort, for HMV, which suffers from inadequate accompaniment, though the singing is magnificent. Whether the shortcomings of that disc were remedied in his Kantorei recording, I do not know. Stylistically Thill is almost, if not quite as good as Walter, and certainly the same criticism of the accompaniment cannot be made here. In this aria, however, language enters in more obtrusively. There is nothing especially bad about "ton sang divin," as the line comes from the lips of Thill, but the original "seintures Blut" is surely more affecting. Perhaps this simply takes a little longer to get accustomed to!

—P. M.

BRAHMS: *Die Mainacht*; and SCHUMANN: *Der Nussbaum*; sung by Marian Anderson with piano accompaniment by Kosti Vehanen. Victor disc No. 14610, price \$2.00.

THE lovely quality of Miss Anderson's voice is somewhat marred in these recordings by excessive vibrato. Her singing of *Die Mainacht* is insufficiently colored, being tonally too much the same throughout. Miss Anderson is to be commended for her excellent German diction, but she does not always give us the impression that she is aware of the poetical implications. In the second line of *Der Nussbaum* she sings "blättrig die Blätter aus" instead of "blättrig die Aeste aus." True, Schumann wrote "Blätter" by mistake, but since the poet Mosen's original copy reads "Aeste," which alone makes sense, the latter word must remain right.

The accompaniments here are well played and recorded.

—P. H. R.

CHORUS: *Silent Night; O Little Town of Bethlehem; Jingle Bells; The Quilting Party; Mid-winter; and Sing We Noel Once More*; sung by The Madrigal Singers, conducted by Lehman Engel. Three 10-in. Columbia discs, 322-M, 320-M, 321-M, price 75c each.

**LEHMAN ENGEL'S** Madrigal Singers offer three pairs of true to type songs. For the Christmas season we get two of the best known church hymns, *O Little Town of Bethlehem* and *Silent Night*, sung straight, with Henry Silvern's organ accompaniments, in exactly the way any competent church choir would do them.

The second disc carries *Jingle Bells*, briskly rhythmic, with a marked decrescendo to represent the merry-makers driving away into the distance. The organ accompaniment is a surprise; sleigh bells lend color. *The Quilting Party* is sung in the same glee club manner, also with organ.

The third record at last brings us the kind of music that only a superior choral group can perform. We hear the silky smoothness and softness of the voice parts and the responsiveness to subtle a *cappella* nuance. Perhaps the words could have been a little more clearly enunciated without a loss of the pure tonal quality. The recording is superb in clarity.

Both of the carols are of the utmost simplicity, well arranged with natural, unstrained harmonies. Gustav Holst's *Mid-winter* employs the first, fourth and fifth stanzas of a poem sometimes called *In the Bleak Midwinter*, and again *A Christmas Carol*, by Christina Rossetti. *Sing We Noel Once More* is a sixteenth-century tune from the Bas Quercy section of southwestern France, arranged by Dean David Stanley Smith of Yale. The English Singers have sung both of these carols much better in their concerts.

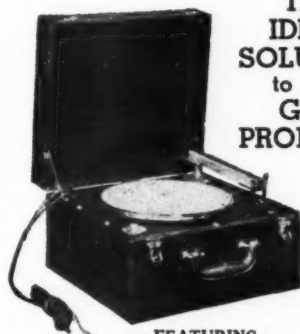
—A. P. D.

**A LIEDER RECITAL BY ELISABETH SCHUMANN:** SCHUMANN: *Loreley*, Op. 53, No. 2; *Ständchen*, Op. 36, No. 2; SCHUBERT: *An die Nachtigall*, Op. 98, No. 1; *Liebhaber in allen Gestalten*; BEETHOVEN: *Wonne der Wehmut*, Op. 83, No. 1; *Mit einem gemalten Bande*, Op. 83, No. 3; MENDELSSOHN: *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*, Op. 34, No. 2; BRAHMS: *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer*, Op. 105, No. 2; *Sandmännchen*; *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*, Op. 96, No. 1; SMETANA: *Der Kuss - Wiegenlied*; GRIEG:

*Peer Gynt - Solvejgs Lied*; WOLF: *Der heilige Josef singt (Nun wandre, Maria); Schlafendes Jesus-kind*. Victor set M-383, ten-inch, price \$9.00.

**THE** Germans have a word, *herrlich*, which better than any other I know describes the art of Elisabeth Schumann. Of all the singers of our time, she is the one who knows exactly what lies within her capacities, and who never oversteps or attempts music which does not suit. It is enough to know that she sings a song to be quite sure that it is a good song for her — of how many singers can the same be said? Her singing has a vitality and sparkle, a blend of vocal purity and infectious humor which no more exhausts itself than the appeal of some choice wine.

Mme. Schumann has made so many tempting lieder recordings in England within the last couple of years that there may be some disappointment occasioned by the absence of certain titles in this album. However, Victor promises a second set to be devoted entirely to songs of Schubert, and that will take in the most important of the omissions. Otherwise there is little fault to find with the discs which have been chosen, except that an uncalled for orchestra takes the place of the



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piano in *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* and *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer*.

But a word should be said about the accompanying booklet. Instead of giving the words and translations, or better still English paraphrases of the songs, the author has undertaken to sketch the history of the German lied, and has made a hasty attempt to force the songs into some sort of historical sequence, admitting at the same time that this is difficult to do. Now no one planning a history would choose these exact songs, and by no stretch can the Grieg *Solvejgs Lied* (incidental music for a Norwegian drama) or the delightful *Wiegenlied* from the Bohemian Smetana's opera *Hubicka*, or *The Kiss*, be made to fit into such a scheme. The original idea behind the album was, according to Mr. Reed, who planned it, to present a recital by Mme. Schumann, not a history of the *Lied*, and in this plan these songs are not out of place. I cannot pass over the remark by the writer of the notes, that "the more reckless" of the admirers of Hugo Wolf regard him as the "ranking writer of songs since Schubert." And, at the risk of seeming hopelessly fussy, I would call attention to the choice of two spellings the album and booklet give us for the singer's first name.

The first record has already been released in this country, but it makes an appropriate opening for the set. The two Schumann songs on the A-side are among the less known of his lieder. *Loreley* is a brief impression of the voice of the siren calling over the waves. *Ständchen* is the song of an expectant lady whose lover has delayed his coming. Schubert's *An die Nachtigall* is a warning to the nightingale not to awaken the beloved one, and in *Liebhaber in allen Gestalten* (one of Mme. Schumann's happiest songs) the singer wishes herself a fish, that she might be caught — or gold, that she might be spent — but, she concludes, she is only herself, so that her lover must take her as she is. Mme. Schumann's treatment of the final line—"Ich bin nun wie ich bin, so nimm mich nur hin"—is one of the most delightfully suggestive bits of vocal coloring I have ever heard.

The two Beethoven songs are so supremely well sung that one can easily forget that they are not great lieder. *Wonne der Wehmut*, for all the world like a brief *Andante*, perhaps for violin and piano, hardly scratches the surface of Goethe's poem: "Dry not, tears of eternal love — how barren and dead the world seems to the half-dried eye." The final line is repeated pointlessly to satisfy the demands of musical form, and the piano part is elegant rather than important. *Mit einem ge-*

*malten Bande* is a better song, for here the repetitions are more in keeping with the spirit of the text. Also by Goethe, the verse is simply a lover's tribute of song to accompany his present of a ribbon.

Nothing need be said of Mendelssohn's *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*, except that I have never heard it sung with such a lilt, and that the line "Heimlich erzählen die Rosen" is given another of the singer's inimitable touches. Brahms' *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer* is taken rather quickly, and with less searching pathos than Gerhardt used to put into the song. Mme. Schumann's dying girl is younger and less worldly-wise: her feeling rises a bit impetuously at the words "und weine bitterlich," but the tragedy is saved for the climax — "Komm, o komme bald." *Sandmännchen*, that delightful lullaby on the old carol-tune *Zu Bethlehem geboren*, has long been needed on records, never, so far as I know, having been done satisfactorily before. Mme. Schumann's tempo again is faster than the usual, but she quickly wins us over, and the amazing phrasing which this briskness makes possible is a joy forever. Incidentally, the singer alters the words at the very beginning, combining, probably by accident, the first and second stanzas.

*Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht* would not, on the face of it, seem like a song for Mme. Schumann. The Heine poem is a sombre one, expressive of world-weariness, relieved at the end by the singing of the nightingale. The soprano manages to catch the atmosphere of gloom at the beginning, and it is a real thrill to hear the word "Liebe" sung at the climax without the usual sacrificing of the vowel sound.

The Smetana *Cradle Song* is sung in the opera to a motherless child, and the music is full of quiet sorrow. Some may remember an old acoustic record of this scene as one of the best by Emmy Destinn. Schumann, again, builds up her effect cumulatively — it is only at the end that we feel the full import of the situation. The familiar song of Solvejg waiting patiently for the return of Peer Gynt is surely known to all. It has been cut down at the beginning, in the middle and at the end to bring its two stanzas within the limits of ten inches, but the vocal part is all there.

As for the magnificent Wolf songs, they must lead us on to more "reckless" claims for their composer. They represent his very best, and the singer gives of her finest art. *Nun wandre, Maria*, as *Der Heilige Josef singt* is perhaps more properly called, is done with a gentle steadiness which makes us for-

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get that a high soprano is hardly the voice of Joseph as he encourages Mary on the way to Bethlehem. *Schlafendes Jesuskind* is all tenderness — a description by the poet Mörike of Albani's painting of the *Sleeping Christ-child*.

In all of these songs the Schumann voice and style, even to the curious clicking sounds which she sometimes makes at the end of phrases, have been faithfully recorded. The balance between voice and instrument might well be taken as a model for American vocal recordings. Perhaps in the Schumann song she was a trifle too near the microphone, but throughout the set the piano accompaniments sound as they should sound, solid and clear, yet not obtrusive, free and yet always with the singer. Those two most dependable of English collaborators, George Reeves and Gerald Moore, provide the background for several of the songs, and Ernest Lush does duty in the Wolf.

—P. M.

\* \* \*

TRADITIONAL: *Grandfather's Clock*; and *The Little Brown Jug*; sung by Harold Williams with the B. B. C. Male Voice Choir, with piano. Ten-inch Columbia, 319-M, price 75c.

**T**HIS disc is for those who like lusty and not over-refined renditions of traditional sentimental songs. The soloist, Harold Williams, has a pleasant baritone, and sings like a Welshman; he was one of the quartet of singers in the great performance of Beethoven's *Ninth* that Toscanini recently conducted in London.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

WARLOCK: *The Fox*; and *Sleep*; sung by Parry Jones, tenor, with piano accompaniment. Columbia disc, No. 318, ten-inch, 75c.

**I**T was with some surprise that I noticed as I turned this record over the absence of the word Masterworks on the label. The songs certainly deserve the distinction though they be English and short.

The late Philip Heseltine, or Peter Warlock, as he elected to call himself, has come to be acknowledged as one of the really significant figures in twentieth century English music, and his admirers do not hesitate to claim for him the title of greatest English song-writer. Though few of his songs are known on this side of the water (and I confess that I have put off the pleasure of mak-

ing some sort of study of them) I have a feeling that this estimate may be a just one.

Warlock belonged to that school of composers who went back to Elizabethan England for their inspiration, not only studying the musical style of the time, but drawing principally on the poets of olden days for their song-texts. He was among the most successful because he went below the outward features of that early poetry and music, realizing that the first concern of the madrigalists and lutenists was the poetry they set, and that the composer's duty was to find the *right* melody and metre for that poetry. This is, of course, the beginning and the end of song, but it is a rare modern who can strip his music of the purely musical embellishments and formulas which have come to be a part of our heritage.

So we find Warlock's approach to the problem of word setting founded soundly upon the vocal melody of such masters as John Dowland, William Byrd and Thomas Morley. He departed from the modern convenience of measured metre which is so often confused with rhythm. At the head of his song *Sleep* we read the direction: "To be sung as though unbarred throughout, i.e. phrased according to the natural accentuation of the words, especially avoiding an accent on the first beat of the bar when no accent is demanded by the sense."

There is no need to describe this restless and appealing song, nor the ghoulish *Fox* on the reverse record side—Parry Jones' diction and the music itself will tell the whole story. The text of *Sleep* is from Warlock's favorite, John Fletcher, while *The Fox*, more modern in spirit, is a setting of a poem by Bruce Blunt. Both songs have a kind of timelessness, due to their blending of an old principle with modern harmonic resources.

Mr. Jones has a serviceable tenor voice, sings with fine understanding, and records well. He has recorded several other Warlock songs for English Columbia; let us hope that this is the beginning of a series of American pressings.

—P. M.

\* \* \*

MOLLY: *The Kerry Dance*; and LAMBERT: *She Is Far From the Land*; sung by John McCormack with orchestra conducted by Lawrence Collingwood. Victor disc No. 14611, price \$2.00.

**M**C CORMACK sings two old favorites with irreproachable diction and the familiar McCormack mannerisms. His voice here

seems more resonant than it was in his recent recordings from Handel. The orchestral backgrounds are well arranged and played with appropriate feeling by Mr. Collingwood. Reproduction here is clear and lifelike.

—P. G.

THOMAS: *Mignon* (abridged); sung by Demoulin, Cernay, d'Arkor, Tragin, and Mayer, with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Theatre Royal, Brussels, conducted by Maurice Bastin. Columbia Operatic Set No. 19, five discs, price \$7.50.

COLUMBIA releases domestically this abridged recording of the favorite *Mignon*, with soloists, and the orchestra of the Monnaie in Brussels.

Side I has a short introduction followed by the chorus and bass aria *Fugitif et tremblant*, sung by the wandering, mad Lothario. Side 2 has a shockingly mundane rendition of the dreamy *Connais-tu le pays*. Side 3 brings the *Swallow Duet*, heavily sung. Side 4 condenses the boisterous finale of Act I. Side 5 is a well sung rendition of Wilhelm's *Adieu, Mignon*, where the hero, infatuated by Philine, comforts Mignon for her foolish love. Side 6 is Mignon's scene of jealousy and despair (*Elle est la*), when she tries to drown herself, and Side 7 is the tender meeting again with Lothario. Side 8 is Wilhelm's beautiful Act III *Romanza* (*Elle ne voyait pas*), as he watches over the sick Mignon and becomes conscious of his awakened love for her. Side 9 shows the girl aroused from her lethargy, beginning to recall her faint recollections of her childhood home. Side 10 presents her *Ave Maria* and the scene where Lothario recognizes her as his long lost daughter, and blesses her and Wilhelm.

In editing, some of the expected excerpts were dropped. The famous overture is lacking, but it is easily available in numerous recordings. The set contains examples of the choral work, representative solos, and several of the best concerted numbers. It omits Philine's brilliant *Polonaise*, the *Styrienne*, the *Gavotte* and Lothario's *Berceuse*. The original French set had six records, but the American release has but five.

The chief fault with this album is the work of the protagonist, Germaine Cernay. Her

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voice is shrill, unsympathetic, and colorless, constantly forced, and devoid of line. Stylistically, she fails utterly in suggesting Mignon's character, never in the least bringing out the humanity and grace of the role. The solos are prosaic and the ensemble work clumsy — the *Swallow Duet* is a dead loss.

Andre d'Arkor, as the Wilhelm Meister, shows a fine large and well used tenor, and has more personality than the average French operatic tenor; he records noticeably well. M. Demoulin, the Lothario, is adequate. The few measures allowed to Philine in this set show Lucienne Tragin's sweet high soprano. Valère Mayer adequately fills a minor role.

Maurice Bastin is the spirited leader of the chorus and the orchestra of the Monnaie. Eli Cohen conducts another orchestra for the accompaniments of Mignon's two arias.

Accompanying the album is a booklet giving the French text and Frederick H. Martens' translation; the excerpts of text are not cut to conform exactly with the records.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \*

BACH: Motet, *Singet dem Herrn*, for double chorus; sung by The Westminster Choir, direction of John Finley Williamson. Victor, one 10-inch disc No. 1845, and one 12-inch disc No. 14613. Price \$3.50.

THE first recordings of two of Bach's finest motets in as many months are undeniable proof of the enterprise of the companies concerned. Last month Gamut offered us *Jesu meine Freude* and now we have Victor's *Singet dem Herrn*. It is unfortunate that neither of the performances is an adequate representation of the music.

The Westminster Choir sings this "greatest test of pure unaccompanied choral singing in existence" with the enthusiasm and joyousness implied in the text. The text, sung in English here, is taken from the 149th Psalm. The performance, as we have implied, is not free of technical and stylistic blemishes, but, considering the magnitude of the task, the singers acquit themselves with credit.

These records show that the sound engineers have not yet overcome all the obstacles that stand in the way of a clear reproduction of a large chorus singing in many parts. In the first movement, for example, the middle

and lower voices are frequently blurred and quite undistinguishable (although this may be a fault of the performers). As a matter of fact, it is hard to see how a recording will ever capture the effect created in a concert hall by two choirs equally constituted singing the same musical material antiphonally. The contrast occasioned by the sound of the choruses reaching our ears alternately from two even slightly different locations disappears when that sound comes from a single speaker.

—N. B.

\* \* \*

## VIOLIN

SCHUBERT: *Rondo*; and TARTINI: *Adagio in E*; played by Joseph Szigeti, accompanied by Nikita Magaloff. Columbia 19062-D, price \$1.50.

THE new disc shows all the merits of Szigeti's always thoughtful and deeply felt playing, and the perfect balance he unfailingly keeps with his master collaborator, Nikita Magaloff.

The Schubert *Rondo* is Friedberg's arrangement of the last movement of Op. 53, piano-forte *Sonata in D*. Commentators have felt that this rondo is, in substance, somewhat out of keeping with the rest of the sonata; by itself it makes a brilliant and violinistic transcription. Duncan remarks on the strong gypsy element of its themes and says that "when played with extreme delicacy and dexterity it is graceful and supremely charming — especially the middle section (in G), which bespeaks the gaiety of Viennese life, the uncontrollable spirits of youth, the passing fancies of a teeming imagination, or indeed what-you-will of brightness and beauty."

The Tartini *Adagio in E* (source unidentified), as arranged by Ondrcek, is music of the opposite pole, stately, introspective, and poised. Szigeti's and Magaloff's interpretation stresses not so much the surge and outpouring of one great unbroken line of melody, as a searching probing of the feeling and meaning of each phrase, at the same time never losing the singing quality of the whole.

The recording is magnificently faithful to the two instruments.

—A. P. D.





# SWING MUSIC

By ENZO ARCHETTI

LAST month this column called your attention to a new swing program on the air, which, because of its quality, gave every indication of being headed for the big air lanes. In the past month it has had the opportunity to test itself thoroughly with the listening public and the public, after a few sample tastes, has found it very good. The popularity of this program has grown enormously. In fact, the *Sunday Morning Swing Concert* on Station WNEW is now the *Saturday Night Swing Club's* only serious rival for the swing-loving air public's attention. There is really no need for any rivalry because there are still lamentably few all-swing programs on the air, but rivalry in this case is practically inevitable because both programs are the same in plan. If the *Sunday Morning Swing Concert* has any advantage over the other, it is in the fact that it is on the air for a full hour.

With the growth of its popularity it was quite natural that curiosity concerning the make-up of the *Sunday Morning Swing Concert* Orchestra, which is the backbone of the program, would grow proportionately. For the information of the readers of this column we have this to offer: the orchestra is substantially the same as the one which was aired over WNEW as the *Make Believe Ballroom Orchestra*. Its personnel is as follows:

Leader and violinist: Merle Pitt; saxophones: Andy Young, George Dessinger, Jim De Meo, Ted Gompers; trumpets: Sam Shapiro, Stanley Casner, Irving Solow; trombones: Al Philburn, Andy Russo; piano: Leo Silverman; guitar: Sam Spergel; bass: Sam Shoohe; drums: Sam Weiss.

The *Swing Concert* is now on the air from 11:00 A. M. to noon, instead of from 11:30 to 12:30, as before. It is now broadcast from the stage of the Criterion Theatre, in New York, and free tickets are available by writing Martin Block, the director of the program.

The *Saturday Night Swing Session* continues its excellent programs unperturbed by the presence of a rival on the air, realizing full well that there is plenty of room for more good swing on the air and also that a public's affection and friendliness are not easily swayed after they have been carefully cultivated for almost a year and a half. On October 30th, too late to be reported in this column last month, but too important to be overlooked, the *Swing Session* went to Hollywood, where it put over one of the finest programs in its history. To head the list was Louis Armstrong and as if that were not enough, there was also Bob Crosby with his entire orchestra and Raymond Scott and his Quintet. This was the first "appearance" of the Quintet on the air since it went to Hollywood to make good in pictures. To celebrate the occasion Raymond Scott presented his latest compositions: *Penguin* and *War Dance of the Wooden Indians*. If there is still any-

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one who doubts that there is humor in music, he has but to listen to these works when they appear on records, as they will, no doubt, quite soon.

Since Raymond Scott and his Quintet was removed as a group from the *Saturday Night Swing Session Orchestra*, the personnel has undergone a considerable change. The present line-up of the S. N. S. S. Orchestra is:

Conductor: Leith Stevens; saxophones: Toots Modell, Hank Ross, Artie Manners, George Tudor; trumpets: (since this group varies from week to week, a collective personnel is given here) Willis Kelly, Jimmy Roselli, Lloyd Williams, Chris Griffin, Russ Case, Nat Natoli; trombones: Joe Vargas, Roland du Pont, Wilbur Schwichtenberg; piano: Walter Gross; guitar: Frank Worrell; bass: Lou Shoober; drums: Billy Gussak.

An interesting bit of news at this time is that this *Swing Session Orchestra* will begin a week's engagement at Loew's State Theatre, in New York, December 9th. I believe this will be the first time that a strictly broadcast orchestra has appeared in public. The reverse is usually the case.

The first definite sign of the abandonment of the *Master* label by Mills is the release this month on Brunswick of Duke Ellington's two latest works, *Crescendo in Blue* and *Diminuendo in Blue*, by the Duke's full orchestra. The only remaining traces of the origin of these recordings are the words "produced by Master Records, Inc." in small type on the label; the *Master* label numbers M649 and M648, respectively, in parentheses; and a lower case "m" before the Brunswick label number, in this case m8004. This last feature seems to indicate that a specially numbered series, identified by this lower case "m", is being created for all the recordings transferred from the *Master* to the *Brunswick* catalog. The abandonment of the *Master* label is due to Mill's failure to arrange a European outlet for *Master* and *Variety* recordings during his recent trip abroad. There is every indication that the *Variety* label will also be discontinued. There have been no new releases for about a month and there are persistent rumors that *Variety* recordings will soon be issued under the *Vocalion* label. In England, the American Brunswick and Vocalion recordings have an outlet through the Decca and Vocalion Companies. In France, through the Decca and Brunswick Companies.

Concerning Ellington's newest compositions: they are unmistakably Ellington. When this writer first heard *Crescendo in Blue* during Ellington's last visit to Harlem, the immediate impression was that the work was definitely derivative. Ravel's *Bolero* was plainly stamped all over it, in spite of Ellington's characteristic orchestration. This statement is not intended to be, in any sense, derogatory. Those who share with me a personal acquaintance with Ellington as a man and composer, will understand that any resemblance between Ravel's *Bolero* and Ellington's *Crescendo in Blue*, is intentional, created for a definite purpose according to the bent of Ellington's mind, and that it is not a plagiarism. Ellington's long list of brilliant original compositions stands as witness to the fact that he does not have to depend on any other composer for ideas.

*Diminuendo in Blue* was heard for the first time in the recorded form. From the few playings possible before this had to go to press, the impression is that neither the *Diminuendo* nor the *Crescendo* is

an Ellington masterpiece but that they are both interesting and characteristic works. Repeated hearings may alter this impression but whatever the ultimate decision, this writer feels that Ellington has never yet written a bad work, only a few weak or mediocre ones, but many brilliant compositions.

Up to now America has supplied the world with the best jazz and jazz musicians. Occasionally, especially in England and France, individual musicians, composers and bands have sprung up and held their own against American competition because they had something a little different to offer but in all cases the inspiration was definitely American. At the moment I can think of only Ambrose, Forsythe, Phillips, Spike Hughes, and the Quintette du Hot Club de France, but these few illustrate the point. The same can be said of jazz recordings. A mere glimpse into foreign record catalogs will show that 98 per cent of the jazz discs are repressings from American recordings by American artists. Which is hardly surprising since jazz is an American product. But occasionally other countries have tried to break away from this dependence and tried to show what they have learned from the Americans. The latest attempt is sponsored by the French magazine *Jazz Hot*. Up to now five records have been issued under a new label named *Swing* which is henceforth dedicated to the best in swing, and only swing. These five records show that the act of independence is not yet complete because six American musicians take part in the recordings. They were in Paris at the time the recordings took place. However, this is nothing to quarrel about because in their announcement of these records, the magazine *Jazz Hot* stated that its purpose was to issue a few records each month of the best swing by the best musicians available at the time. The records are SW1: *Honey-suckle Rose* and *Crazy Rhythm* by Coleman Hawkins and His All Star Jam Band (Coleman Hawkins and Alix Combelle, tenor saxes; Benny Carter and André Syan, alto saxes; Stephane Grappelly, piano; Django Reinhardt, guitar; d'Hellemes, bass; and Tommy Benford, drums); SW 2: *Chicago* and *Charleston* by the Quintette du Hot Club de France (Django Reinhardt, guitar; Stephane Grappelly, violin; Marcel Bianchi and Pierre Ferret, guitars; and Louis Vola, bass); SW 3: *Hot Club Blues* and *I've Found a New Baby* by Dicky Wells and His Orchestra (Dicky Wells, trombone; Bill Dillard and Shad Collins, trumpets; Howard Johnson, alto sax; Sam Allen, piano; Roger Chaput, guitar; and Bill Beason, drums); SW 4: *Tiger Rag* and *Pennies from Heaven* by André Ekyan, alto sax, and Django Reinhardt, guitar; SW 5: *Tea for Two* and *Weather Beaten Blues*, piano solos by Teddy Weatherford. No price is quoted in the announcements and these records are available at present only from the magazine *Jazz Hot*, 15 Rue du Conservatoire, Paris (9e). When copies are received, these discs will be reviewed in detail in this column.

Bunny Berigan has definitely gone big-time by playing, with his orchestra, at the Paramount Theatre in New York in the latter part of November. This appearance automatically links him with the front line swing bands which regularly appear on the Paramount stage, and, of course, it invites the inevitable comparisons by the listening public. It can be said, with absolute sincerity, that Bunny and his band gave a good account of themselves.

*Bughouse Rhythm*, that funny swing program, is back again on the air. It is now being broadcast by WJZ on Fridays at 7:45 P. M., EST.

## RECORD COLLECTORS' CORNER

By JULIAN MORTON MOSES

SO great was the response to previous re-pressings by the most exuberant of contraltos, Jeanne Gerville-Reache, that both The Historic Record Society and The International Record Collectors' Club feature her records this month. From the former comes a 12-inch disc, HRS No. 1011, price \$2.25, coupling her *D'une prison* of Hahn with the smooth flowing and elegantly phrased aria *O ma lyre immortelle* from *Sapho*. At the same time, the latter organization presents her first Victor selection, *Va, laisse couler mes larmes* from *Werther*, with Chaminade's *Chanson Slave* on a 10-inch disc, IRCC No. 109, price \$1.75. Both these issues will probably be gobbled up in short order so our advice is to order early. To the clubs our advice is to get busy on the remaining Gerville-Reache matrices and to bring out the following suggested couplings:

10-inch: *Trovatore, Stride la vampa*, and *Ich grolle nicht* (Schumann).

10-inch: *Carmen, Habanera* (87038) and *Vivandiere, viens avec nous*.

12-inch: *Samson, Mon coeur* (88184), and *Printemps qui commence* (88244).

If the 10-inch *Habanera* is no longer available, the 12-inch version (88278) might be substituted for *Mon coeur* which appears anyway on the double-face Columbia record No. A5533. The *Vivandiere* deserves a re-pressing at any rate.

Two other releases of much interest to collectors comprise the remainder of the current bulletin from The Historic Record Society. The first, a single-face 12-inch disc, HRS No. 1012, price \$1.50, is claimed to be the only remaining matrix of the justly celebrated American prima donna, Carolina White, and constitutes the aria, *Roberto, tu che adoro* from the neglected Meyerbeer opera, in a superb rendition which is marred only by poor diction (she got over the "pee-aytar" by the time her fine Aida recordings were made a year later). It was issued in March 1912 by Columbia as No. 30870 or one side of double-faced discs Nos. A5353, H1094 and S5036. On the second release, the much sought-after Charles Dalmores sings

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# IN THE POPULAR VEIN

By HORACE VAN NORMAN

## STANDARD POPULAR

AAAA—*A Foggy Day*, and *I Can't Be Bothered Now*. Ray Noble and his Orchestra with Fred Astaire. Brunswick 7982.

AAA—*Nice Work If You Can Get It*, and *Things Are Looking Up*. Ray Noble and his Orchestra with Fred Astaire. Brunswick 7983.

It has always been a matter of considerable speculation to your reporter why the Fred Astaire records invariably achieve such a fantastic degree of popularity. Admittedly no great shakes as a vocalist (a good singer for a dancer would be about the right way to describe him), his superb tapping is no very great asset to a mere recording, with the visual element lacking, and any first rate drummer could provide precisely the same effect with considerably less effort and expense.

The answer seems to lie less in Astaire's own participation than in the indubitable superiority of the arrangements and the remarkable good fortune Astaire has had in the matter of tunes. With two superb scores from each of the three premier songwriters of our time, Berlin, Kern and Gershwin, and with the unfailingly excellent Johnny Green orchestrations and performances, Astaire was unbelievably lucky in his choice of collaborators. Now that policy has deemed it inadvisable that Astaire and Green continue their association on records, there is no leader whom one could think of as a more satisfactory successor to Green than Ray Noble.

If these records, from *Damsel in Distress*, are not the completely first rate job that we might expect, the cause lies in the rather obvious inferiority of the tunes. The last complete score written before Gershwin's tragic death, it seems plainly the work of an unwell man. Musically adroit and skillful as they all are, only *Foggy Day* has that persuasive quality that will place it in the ranks of Gershwin's permanent song hits, of which he wrote such an unbelievably large number. Noble's arrangements, if they lack the pianistic glitter of Green's, are thoroughly satisfying and have never a dull, unoriginal phrase. *Foggy Day*, incidentally, is the only tune Gershwin wrote in his entire career, to the best of my knowledge, which is even remotely reminiscent of another man's work. The opening phrase bears a striking resemblance to Jimmy McHugh's *Dinner at Eight*.

AAA—*Rosalie*, and *Close*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Victor 25698.

These two numbers are completely undistinguished and both, incredibly enough, bear the name of Cole Porter. Our first sophisticate can certainly go corny on us when he wants to and we prefer to believe that he wrote these two with his tongue in his cheek. Not that there is anything particularly bad or

inept about them. It's just that they are less like Porter than they are, say, early Romberg. But we guess Porter, who is a shrewd fellow anyway, knows his movie public. (Both are from the forthcoming MGM film *Rosalie*). Reisman gives them appropriately resonant, swirly performances and the record will sell very, very well indeed.

\* \* \*

AAA—I've Hitched My Wagon to a Star, and Let That Be a Lesson to You. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25708.

Our nomination for the outstanding songwriting team in Hollywood just now is the Johnny Mercer-Richard A. Whiting combine. The youngster Mercer and the veteran Whiting have talents that are amazingly well suited to each other and it is utterly impossible for them to turn out a banal number. Whiting, incidentally, is a rather curious figure in our national scene. A man whose songwriting career goes back nearly as far as Berlin's and Kern's, and who has written nearly as many and as good song hits as either of them, his name, I venture to assert, is completely unknown to all but a very few outside the musical and theatrical business. What Whiting apparently needs is a press agent, but maybe he just doesn't care and neither would I if, like him, I had taken more money out of the Hollywood coffers than any of my more highly touted contemporaries.

The two numbers here are from the new First National film, *Hollywood Hotel*, and both can be listened to without blushing for the inanities of tune and phrase that characterize the average popular song. Goodman's metronomic treatment is not ideally adapted to the former number particularly, but both "sound" well and Martha Tilton's vocals are attractively handled.

## HOT JAZZ

AAAA—*Bob White*, and *Jamboree Jones*. Johnny Mercer and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7988.

Johnny Mercer, not infrequently mentioned with favor in this department as a songwriter, has got him a band in Hollywood which makes its recording debut here with a brace of Mercer's own tunes.

Surely no number in the memory of man has been more brilliantly recorded in a shorter period of time than *Bob White*. With superb performances by Goodman, Mildred Bailey, Connie Boswell and Bing Crosby, jointly, and finally this grand platter by Mercer himself, *Bob White* has certainly put its best foot forward on the record lists. Mercer's disc features, besides a good small swing combo and Mercer's own inimitable vocalizing, a perfectly swell vocal ensemble consisting of five fellows and a girl. This version of *Bob White*, who had a "corny trill", is light-footed, exhilarating and highly amusing.

AAAA—*Dipsy Doodle*, and *Who?* Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25693.

*Who?* is an obvious effort to duplicate the success of *Marie*, which set a sales record of fantastic proportions. Being an imitation, it is less effective and amusing than the record it is patterned after, but it's a good enough job anyway. *Dipsy Doodle*, one of Larry Clinton's concoctions, has about as monotonous a thematic idea as you often hear, but Dorsey rides it with such vigor that it comes through to good effect.

AAAA—*Crescendo in Blue*, and *Diminuendo in Blue*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8004.

The incomparable Ellington gives us another pair of masterpieces here. There is a superb vitality here that no one in the world but Ellington can achieve. Present, too, is that sombre quality which is never absent from anything that Ellington writes and which gives his work an absolutely distinctive atmosphere which no one else could duplicate if he tried. There'll be plenty here to terrify the simple souls who like their musical fare in easily digestible form, for the Duke really shoots the works, particularly in *Crescendo in Blue*. Starting with a spunky little figure in the low clarinets, he builds up to an orgiastic climax that must be electrifying in actual performance. Regrettably, a good recording job wasn't done, so it will be a rare pick-up that can "take" the last inch of this side.

AAA—*Vieni, Vieni*, and *Handful of Keys*. Benny Goodman Quartet. Victor 25705.

Incredibly fleet virtuoso performances by the increasingly skillful Goodman Quartet. These are both played at a breath-taking tempo and are far less interesting as good swing, per se, than they are as technical exhibitionism.

AAA—*Big Dipper*, and *Midnight in the Madhouse*. Larry Clinton and his Orchestra. Victor 25697.

Highly competent jobs by a new combo under the guidance of Larry Clinton, ace arranger and composer. Both numbers are Clinton's own, and both are interesting in contrasting styles, although the latter is uncomfortably reminiscent of Sid Phillip's *Night Ride*.

AAA—I Got Rhythm, and *Humoresque in Swing Time*. Emilio Caceres Trio. Victor 25710.

Something new in swing combinations, this group consists of one guitarist, one violinist, and one who doubles on clarinet and tenor sax. Swing with a slightly Latin flavor results and it is none the less agreeable on that account. Their *I Got Rhythm* is terrifically paced and provides some highly original effects, considering their limited resources.

### Other Current Dance Records

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*Smoke Rings*, and *Always*. Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra. Decca 1473.

AAA—*Trees*, and *What's Your Story*. Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra. Vocalion 3760.

AAA—*Sweet Someone*, and *I Want to Be in Winchell's Column*. Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra. Victor 25709.

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AA—*Gettin' Some Fun Out of Life, and Roses in December.* Dick Robertson and his Orch. Decca 1487.

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A—*Something To Sing About, and Out of the Blue.* Jimmie Grier and his Orch. Decca 1474.

A—*Why Talk About Love? and I Double Dare You.* Woody Herman and his Orch. Decca 1523.

A—*I Got Rhythm, and Flight of the Bumble Bee.* Jimmy Dorsey and his Orch. Decca 1508.

## RECORD COLLECTORS' CORNER

(Continued from Page 319)

*Ouvrez-vous sur mon front from Griseldis,* and Romeo's exhortation. *Ah leve-toi, Soliel,* a 12-inch disc, HRS No. 2004, price \$2.25, autographed. We are not informed whether the 1907 or the 1913 matrix will be used for the *Romeo et Juliette* selection.

The International Record Collectors' Club announces a re-pressing of two rare items by Frances Alda who recently made her debut in print as well. They are the shimmering and delightful *Sul fil d'un soffio* from Verdi's *Falstaff* and *Ah, dunque ei m'amera* from the *Loreley of Catalani* (not Verdi — Mme. Alda, sic.) Combined on this record, a 12-inch disc, IRCC No. 111, price \$2.25, autographed, are selections showing the loveliness of a famous voice early in his career (they date from 1910 and 1912 and have been cut out over 22 years). Also announced is a re-issue of IRCC No. 59, a 12-inch disc, price \$2.25, coupling *Der Erbkönig* of David Bispham and the *Faust Serenata* by Vittorio Arimondi, as well as two additions to the IRCC Fonotipia-Odeon series. These are both 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch discs, price \$2.00 each, and offer Lilli Lehmann singing *Auf dem Wasser* by Schubert and *Freudvoll und leidvoll* in the Beethoven arrangement and the noted Rosina Storchio in a recording in two parts of Norina's appraisal of the *Tristan and Isolde* tale from Donizetti's masterpiece, *Don Pasquale*.

## NBC-Symphony Orchestra

THE NBC-Symphony Orchestra began its first series of broadcasts on Saturday night November 13th at 10 o'clock, EST, instead of 9 o'clock as we announced in our September issue. A large invited audience, liberally sprinkled with celebrities, was assembled in the studio. A group of critics also attended at the invitation of the broadcasting officials.

Whether to criticize or review these concerts from the studio or from a radio outside seems to be a question. The broadcasting officials seem to think that the critics should assemble in the studio, but from the experience we had there the orchestra did not show up so advantageously; the tonal quality lacked the luster and vitality that it had over the air when heard on a good reproducer. Several critics with whom we talked concurred with us on this. So, despite the fact that the broadcasting company seeks to give the performances of this orchestra the aspects of a public concert, the only real way truly to estimate its qualities would be over the air.

It cannot be said that this new orchestra, despite its assemblage of many notable players, attained in its first or second broadcasts the qualities one associates with such organizations as the Boston and Philadelphia Orchestras. The level of its playing was exceptionally high, however, and it can be expected that after the organization has been rehearsed longer it will achieve greater finesse and coordination. And it is also to be expected that Mr. Toscanini will mould it into a great ensemble after he assumes control.

Criticism here of the performances of various works heard to date in the programs of the NBC-Symphony would be superfluous since the performances have gone, via the way of all radio, into the air. Mr. Monteux, the first conductor, has placed us in his debt for many fine interpretations of certain works, at the same time that he has left us disagreeing with his readings of others.

### Rodzinski on Podium with NBC Symphony

Artur Rodzinski, internationally famous conductor of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, will take up the baton as conductor of the NBC Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, December 4, succeeding Pierre Monteux, who concluded a series of three appear-

ances as maestro of the newest of symphony orchestras. The Rodzinski concert, the fourth in the NBC Symphony series, will be heard as usual, over the combined NBC-Red and NBC-Blue Networks from 10:00 to 11:30 p. m., EST.

A Harty arrangement of Handel's *Water Music* will open the concert, followed by Beethoven's well-beloved *Fifth Symphony*, *Pohjola's Daughter*, by the contemporary Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius, and Two Nocturnes by Debussy, *Nuages* and *Fetes*. The final number will be Albeniz's *Triana*.

Rodzinski will also conduct the concerts by the NBC Symphony Orchestra on December 11 and 18, leading up to Christmas night when Arturo Toscanini will begin his series of ten concerts. This and succeeding concerts will be presented from Studio 8H at the NBC Radio City studios.

#### Ernst Wolff in New "Night Music" Series

Ernest Wolff, well-known German baritone, will give the first of a series of three weekly programs devoted to the songs of the great masters on Tuesday, December 7, from 10:45 to 11:00 p. m., EST. The series has for its general title *A Little Night Music*, which is a literal translation of the title of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. More freely, it describes a small serenade. Wolff, a native of Baden-Baden, was formerly head of the Frankfurt School of Opera at the Conservatoire; conductor of the Frankfurt Opera, and a guest conductor in the International Chamber Music Festivals at Baden-Baden and other towns. His idea that a conductor should have a good understanding of voices led him into the study of singing. He has since sung in the leading cities of Europe. He provides his own piano accompaniment, an unusual talent. Wolff's first program is an all-Schubert recital consisting of *Der Lindenbaum*; *Wohin*; *Heidenroslein*; *Der Musensohn* and *Unge- duld*.

#### The Opera Broadcasts

With the broadcast of *Manon* on Saturday afternoon, December 4, the National Broadcasting Company inaugurates its seventh consecutive season of Saturday matinee broadcasts direct from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York. Every Saturday matinee during the regular season will be broadcast over the nationwide NBC-Blue Network.

(Kindly turn to last page)

## TO ADMIRERS OF DELIUS

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

The Schola Cantorum of New York is contemplating giving a first performance in America of Delius' greatest choral work, *The Mass of Life*, at Carnegie Hall on January 12th next. The Schola, as you know, has continually undertaken the first performances of works which have proved themselves of importance in American musical life, and wishes to signalize the value it ascribes to Delius' composition in the same way.

For years in the past, you have championed Delius, and as conductor of the Schola Cantorum, I should like to go on record as a profound believer in your campaign, because Delius seems to me the composer who paralleled Debussy in giving expression to the movement which we now know as Impressionism; only that while Debussy represented the Latin races, Delius represented the Teutonic and Celtic. His mood pictures, both for orchestra and chorus give an impression of north European nature not to be found elsewhere in music, and in works like *The Mass of Life*, where his fundamental philosophy is expressed, that sensuous mood is heightened by force and dramatic expression which the pure contemplation of nature sometimes lacks.

The extremely costly production of this work is being made possible by a small group of Delius lovers, and it is hoped with the support of other believers in Delius' works, who exist throughout America, to make this performance financially as well as artistically successful, with the object of bringing forward other unperformed works of his, not only in New York, but also in order that works successful here will find performance elsewhere.

Sincerely yours,

HUGH ROSS

N. Y. City, November 19, 1937

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone interested in furthering the cause of Delius' music in America will help by contributing any amount they wish (from \$1.00 upwards) to the Schola Cantorum of New York, 333 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

### THE AMERICAN RECORD COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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The opening program will begin at 1:55 p. m., EST, and will bring to millions of opera lovers the celebrated voices of Richard Crooks, American tenor, who will be Chevalier des Grieux, and of Bidu Sayao, the brilliant Brazilian soprano, who created a sensation last year in her first season at the Metropolitan. The conductor will be Maurice de Abravanel.

All of the most important artists of last season will again be heard at the Metropolitan, Edward Johnson, manager of the Metropolitan announced.

Newcomers to the Metropolitan include some of the most distinguished voices of the younger generation of opera singers. Rosa Pauly, heard last Summer at Salzburg; Enid Szanthe, Hungarian-Irish contralto of Vienna, Covent Garden and Bayreuth; Marita Farel, chosen for high lyric roles in Wagner repertoire; Jan Kiepura, lyric tenor, already famous in America as a star in motion pictures, and Bruno Landi, young Italian lyric tenor, will be among those making their debut at the Metropolitan in the coming weeks.

Nine additions have been made to the Metropolitan repertoire, including Walter Damrosch's *The Man Without a Country*, and three operas by Richard Strauss. The chief revival will be Verdi's immortal *Otello*, restored to Metropolitan repertoire after a lapse of 24 years.

The season itself has been extended two weeks to meet the demands from regular subscribers and others who were disappointed last year when they sought to purchase tickets. It will continue through 16 weeks in New York City, ending March 20, 1938.

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## EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 281)

subsequent listening in the same way will make us aware of its essential worth. If one seeks to understand a work, and then finds it means nothing to him, that is a different question. It is not essential that he pursue further hearing of it, for it is unlikely that he will find it completely rewarding, if in the first few hearings he has found nothing to his liking. No man is compelled to like what his neighbor likes. Mutual agreement on all things is not possible in a world that is vital and progressive; if it existed there would be small reason for life. And, if it existed in the appreciation of music, creation would soon be terminated, for the composer who felt he had something to say that was different and newer, would have no incentive to say it.

Since the inception of *The American Music Lover*, we who write reviews have trained

ourselves to be open-minded about all criticism received, and, in like manner, to be open minded in writing our reviews. If we have failed upon occasion, it was not because we were turning pontifical, but because, being human, we were momentarily forgetful that our boredom was not necessarily a universal one.

In writing our reviews, we endeavor to give the reader an idea of what he may expect. We do not try to thrust upon him personal opinion. If we personally do not like certain composers, it is not for us to allow our dislike to influence our critical dissertations, but rather to consider the more universal values of their music, and the quality and character of the performance it is given.

The progress of *The American Music Lover* has been due to its honesty and its willingness to listen to its critics, whether the criticism given has been warranted or not. It has been said that "in a full day's work, there is always some criticism, be it ever so small, which can apply either to ourselves or to our efforts." If one honestly likes a thing, one is justified in shouting it from the housetops, but one must not be critical of his neighbors if they do not agree with him. When we accept an advertisement, we are not beholden to the advertiser to back his products unconditionally, for if we did we would be nothing but a puff sheet. On the other hand, if we find certain values in an advertiser's products, we believe we are justified in saying that we do. This does not, however, imply that everyone must agree with us; but the point is that our comments, whether laudatory or disparaging, are honest and sincere.

Self-improvement is not realized without some criticism. Much that we have received from our readers in the past has been of inestimable value, and because we know that, we welcome critical comments. And whenever these are forthcoming, we can assure our readers we shall consider them seriously, and if a fault exists which it is possible to remedy we shall make every effort to do so. But, since we recognize that mere fault finding is a waste of time, we feel justified in ignoring those who indulge in it. Fortunately, we can honestly say, our correspondents have never been guilty of this.

The proper exercise of our critical faculties, it has been said, is understanding. And it is through understanding, or through the effort to understand, that the good will of others is gained, and the true function of criticism is manifested.

# Our Radio Dial

(Eastern Standard Time)

## NBC HIGHLIGHTS FOR DECEMBER

### (Red Network)

#### Sundays—

12:01 P.M.—Denver String Quartet  
7:30 P.M.—Fireside Recitals  
9:30 P.M.—American Album of Familiar Music

#### Mondays—

8:30 P.M.—Voice of Firestone  
10:30 P.M.—Music for Moderns

#### Tuesdays—

2:00 P.M.—Fun in Music  
2:30 P.M.—Gen. Fed. of Women's Clubs' Program  
7:15 P.M.—Vocal Varieties

#### Wednesdays—

6:35 P.M.—Joan Edwards, contralto  
7:45 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs

#### Thursdays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC Music Guild

#### Fridays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC-Music Appreciation Hour  
8:00 P.M.—Cities Service Concert  
9:00 P.M.—Waltz Time

#### Saturdays—

7:45 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs  
10:00 P.M.—NBC-Symphony Orchestra

### (Blue Network)

#### Sundays—

12:30 P.M.—Radio City Music Hall  
2:00 P.M.—RCA Magic Key  
5:00 P.M.—Metro. Opera Auditions  
8:00 P.M.—General Motors Concert

#### Mondays—

6:05 P.M.—U. S. Army Band  
9:00 P.M.—Philadelphia Orchestra

#### Tuesdays—

2:30 P.M.—Music Guild  
3:00 P.M.—U. S. Marine Band  
7:45 P.M.—Vivian Della Chiesa, soprano

#### Wednesdays—

9:30 P.M.—NBC-Minstrel Show  
10:30 P.M.—Bay Region Fed. Sym. Orch.

#### Thursdays—

3:15 P.M.—Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra  
4:30 P.M.—Gen. Fed. of Women's Clubs' Program  
8:15 P.M.—The Lieder Singers

#### Fridays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC-Music Appreciation Hour

#### Saturdays—

6:35 P.M.—Alma Kitchell, songs  
9:00 P.M.—National Barn Dance  
10:00 P.M.—NBC-Symphony Orchestra

## COLUMBIA HIGHLIGHTS FOR DECEMBER

#### Sundays—

12:30 P.M.—Salt Lake City Tabernacle  
3:00 P.M.—N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orch.  
7:00 P.M.—Jeanette MacDonald  
9:00 P.M.—Ford Sunday Hour

#### Mondays—

3:00 P.M.—Ann Leaf, organ

#### Tuesdays—

10:30 P.M.—Del Casino, tenor

#### Wednesdays—

4:00 P.M.—Curtis Institute of Music  
8:30 P.M.—Deanna Durbin — Eddie Cantor  
9:00 P.M.—Kostelanetz Orch. with Soloists

#### Thursdays—

4:30 P.M.—U. S. Army Band  
6:00 P.M.—Del Casino, tenor

#### Fridays—

3:00 P.M.—Columbia Concert Hall  
6:00 P.M.—Essays in Music — Victor Bay & Orch.  
7:15 P.M.—Margaret Daum, soprano  
8:00 P.M.—Hammerstein's Music Hall  
10:00 P.M.—Kitty Carlisle, soprano and Reed Kennedy, baritone

#### Saturdays—

11:00 A.M.—Cincinnati Cons. of Music  
5:45 P.M.—Coolidge String Quartet  
7:00 P.M.—Swing Session  
7:30 P.M.—Carborundum Band

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